

# The Mayor's Scholarship Controversy and Penn's Obligations to the City of Philadelphia

Senior Thesis: URBS 400

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## **Abstract**

Relations between urban universities and their surrounding communities, referred to as town-gown, have historically been strained. Conflicts have centered on use of space, encroaching student populations, land taxes, and priorities of each constituent. The relationship between the University of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia is exemplary of these tensions, as its history is riddled with conflict. In the 1990s, a group called the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia (PILCOP) filed a lawsuit against Penn, accusing the university of failing to provide an adequate number of scholarships under its Mayor's Scholarship program. City residents, student groups, and even City Councilors rallied against Penn alongside the lawsuit, and a prolonged struggle played out between the two sides, bringing intense publicity and polarizing town and gown.

The Mayor's Scholarship controversy fits cleanly into larger narratives of town-gown tensions, which can help explain why this legal question rose to such importance in the public eye. This paper reviews literature on town and gown, primary source publications from the time of the lawsuit, and key interviews to understand how the controversy fits into broader narratives. Additionally, it traces lasting impacts of the lawsuit on financial aid and models of community partnership at Penn. Lastly, it investigates the lasting significance of the controversy to the relationship between Penn and Philadelphia and town-gown more generally.

The picture that emerges is one of a relationship in which the University and the City are important to one another. We stand on common ground, our futures very much intertwined.

- President Sheldon Hackney, University Annual Report 1987-1988

## Preface

My interest in this topic of research is rooted in my personal experience at the University of Pennsylvania. From early in freshman year, I felt and heard about a phenomenon called the Penn Bubble. This term refers to an invisible bubble of isolation that surrounds Penn, both keeping students in and outsiders out. Moreover, the Bubble refers to the distinction between what exists within and without: gross economic inequity, access to educational and other resources, racial divisions, and more. In some ways, the Penn Bubble positively represents the safety of Penn's campus for nervous Penn students exploring their academic pursuits with their basic needs easily satisfied for them. But in other ways, it represents a broken relationship between Penn and the city of Philadelphia.

It was this later meaning that caught my attention, and upon beginning research for my thesis I sought to research something that would address university-city relations. I met with Mark Lloyd, the Director of University Archives, and we had a wonderful discussion about the topic that led us to the history of the Mayor's Scholarship. Mr. Lloyd told me how, in his recently published book *Becoming Penn*, he and his co-author Professor John Puckett touched upon the Mayor's Scholarship in the context of Penn's relationship with Philadelphia. But why the controversy became so heated and widespread, and what were the lasting implications of it, were questions yet to be fully addressed. My interest was piqued, and I began researching the topic.

I'd like to first acknowledge Mr. Lloyd for his help and role in cultivating this topic and guiding my research. I'd also like to thank Eric Schneider, my thesis advisor,

for his support over the course of the semester, self-proclaimed snarky editing comments, and for editing my first draft over Thanksgiving. Similarly, I would like to acknowledge the other members of my thesis seminar, who have given me valuable feedback all semester, and who have struggled through the process of completing a thesis together.

I would also like to identify a problem with my research. There were several ways I could have gone about trying to understand the larger forces surrounding the Mayor's Scholarship. Due to my time constraints as an undergraduate, I sought the most easily accessible forms of research I could. However, I think other approaches would give access to additional valuable information on the topic. One possible avenue for continued research would be to conduct broad interviews with residents from the City about the Mayor's Scholarship, as well as to interview all key related actors. Additionally, more data could be collected by expanding key searches to more publications than the two used here.

## I. Introduction

The University of Pennsylvania, like many other American universities, is physically situated within an urban context. This position demands a wide variety of interactions between city and campus, ranging from those between populations of students and residents, to those between the governing bodies of the University and the City government. Unfortunately, many of these interactions throughout Penn's history have been tense. The relationship between Penn and Philadelphia has been riddled with conflict and controversy.

The story of the Mayor's Scholarship controversy exemplifies this complicated history. The Mayor's Scholarship, offered by the University to Philadelphia students, was

founded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in exchange for a plot of land from the city. In the early 1990's, the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia (PILCOP) filed a lawsuit against the University, claiming that the University had not been living up to its legal obligations to Philadelphia students. The lawsuit proceedings spanned several years, and became a hotly contested topic around the city. In fact, the city rose up against the Penn in quick and dramatic fashion, including individuals from within the school. Parent groups, faculty groups, school administrators, individuals and others joined the plaintiff side of the lawsuit in anger against Penn, marking a tipping point in university-community relations. But why did the city rise up so intensely, what other factors exaggerated this question of legality, and what resulted from this prolonged struggle?

In this paper, I will begin by situating the controversy within a widely discussed body of literature on university-city relations. Secondly, I will trace the history of the Mayor's Scholarship. Finally, I will present independent research into the scholarship controversy, seeking to explain this dramatic conflict and its consequences. I researched and analyzed newspaper publications from the corresponding time period, using them as primary sources for the issues surrounding the scholarship controversy. Concurrently, I identified key individuals to interview using a snowball approach to give color and depth to my archival research.

From my research, I have concluded that the Mayor's Scholarship controversy was exemplary of traditional town-gown conflicts, its widespread support coming from issues much larger than any number of scholarships, and that the lawsuit resulted in changes to undergraduate financial aid models and strategies for community partnership at the University.

## II. Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

As previously discussed, the University of Pennsylvania is surrounded by the city of Philadelphia. Interactions between Penn and the city are complex and multifaceted. In broader discussions of university-city relations, this dynamic is referred to as town and gown. In order to understand the complicated modern day relationship between Penn and Philadelphia, we must look at the history of town-gown relations. More specifically, my ultimate goal is to trace traditional tensions in town-gown relations and apply their frameworks to understanding what happened in the 1990s between Penn and Philadelphia.

The terms town and gown themselves originated in the European Middle Ages. “Town” referred to the neighboring, non-academic populations to medieval universities. “Gown” referred to people associated with the university. The term has religious roots, as many of these early universities served to educate members of the ministry and social elite.<sup>1</sup> These clergy members wore gowns, and thus university students became distinguished by their clothing. Over time, the term expanded to encompass university communities more broadly. The distinction of town and gown continues to be used in modern literature on the relationship between academic institutions and their neighboring communities.

Scholars agree that town-gown relations have historically been strained. Gavazzi notes how, “campus and community interactions can often be portrayed as a struggle, an exasperating one at that.”<sup>2</sup> Authors note a number of causes for this lasting tension. From my survey of the field, I have determined that most causes can be characterized as

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<sup>1</sup> Loomis Mayfield, “Town and Gown in America: Some Historical and Institutional Issues of the Engaged University,” Education for Health 14.2 (2001): 233.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen M. Gavazzi, Michael Fox, and Jeff Martin, “Understanding Campus and Community Relationships through Marriage and Family Metaphors: A Town-Gown Typology,” Innovative Higher Education 39.5 (2014): 362.

*isolationist* or *confrontational* in nature. I use *isolationist* to describe causes that separate universities from their communities, while I use *confrontational* to describe causes that engendered conflict between the two.

Authors note three main isolationist divisions in town-gown relations. Early in the history of town-gown relations, universities' religious affiliations encouraged intentional division from their neighboring communities. Members of universities believed cities to be morally corrupt and wanted to keep their students from their bad influences.<sup>3</sup> They sought to cultivate "a spiritual and intellectual separateness,"<sup>4</sup> apart from surrounding populations. Jumping ahead and narrowing in on the American context, many authors note the passage of the Morrill Land Act of 1862 as a significant dividing wedge. This law established land grant colleges, providing them with land and federal aid in exchange for their provision of public services like agricultural research.<sup>5</sup> It had the consequence of turning towns into "obligations" for universities, as opposed to "relational partners."<sup>6</sup> Communities became "clients" to universities, a relationship in which universities were disproportionately powerful and communities overly dependent.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, the proliferation of the campus model across American universities between 1945-1990 further isolated universities. This model created university campuses as self-sufficient entities, complete with everything a student might need. Consequently, students had less reason to leave

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen D. Bruning, Shea McGrew, and Mark Cooper, "Town-gown Relationships: Exploring University-community Engagement from the Perspective of Community Members," Public Relations Review 32.2 (2006): 126.

<sup>4</sup> Gavazzi 262.

<sup>5</sup> Mayfield 233.

<sup>6</sup> Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper 126.

<sup>7</sup> Mayfield 231-240.

campus, and the campus developed intangible barriers to their neighboring communities.<sup>8</sup> The adoption of the campus model created, “extremely palpable town-gown divisions.”<sup>9</sup>

Other interactions, confrontational in nature, have caused heated tension between town and gown. For example, conflicts have arisen due to the physical expansion of universities into their neighboring communities. Post 1945, the combination of new, more numerous student populations and federal defense spending focused on university research and development caused expansion of university campuses.<sup>10</sup> This was due in part to the thousands of new students enrolling through the G.I. Bill in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, universities needed more physical space. They built new buildings and purchased new land, expanding outwards. Unfortunately, urban universities were surrounded by already developed land; so as they expanded, surrounding communities reacted negatively to their intrusion. Mayfield notes how, “The community saw the university taking more land and believed that real estate, and the protection of real estate, was the urban university’s only interest in the community.”<sup>12</sup> Growing urban universities have had to contend with a delicate balance between a practical need for more space, and the negative consequences of growing outwards into their neighbors.

Another root cause of direct conflict involves universities’ disproportionate concentrations of young people coming in contact with general populations. This concentration of students depletes the availability of housing for nearby residents.<sup>13</sup><sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gavazzi 362.

<sup>9</sup> Gavazzi 362.

<sup>10</sup> Mayfield 234.

<sup>11</sup> Dale McGirr, Ronald Kull, and Scott Enns, “Town and Gown,” Economic Development Journal (2003): 17.

<sup>12</sup> McGirr, Kull, and Enns 235.

<sup>13</sup> Blake Gumprecht, “The American College Town,” Geographical Review 93.1 (2003): 70.



University construction rarely keeps pace with growth in student enrollment, creating a higher demand for student rental housing that displaces permanent residents. Increased rents, higher demand for city services, and even conflict around parking spots are side effects. Additionally, student behavior itself disrupts town populations. Alcohol consumption has been a point of contention between town and gown populations, and has led to new regulations, fines, and policing strategies.<sup>15</sup> Similar conflicts arise around drug use and excessive noise.<sup>16</sup>

In the United States, the nonprofit status of many urban universities has similarly caused a lot of tension. To begin with, we must understand what the nonprofit model means. Weisbrod describes this sector as existing to satisfy a public good outside of what is provided by the government.<sup>17</sup> The ‘public good’ in an institution of higher education like Penn would include provision of responsibilities otherwise provided by the state or production of benefits to communities outside of the university, such as: education, healthcare, volunteer programs, scholarships, and other services to advance progress outside of the institution.<sup>18</sup> In exchange for these public goods, private universities are granted land-tax exemption, allowing them to forego tax payments on the land they own.

This tax exemption has caused considerable in town-gown relations. Urban universities occupy valuable property that could otherwise generate significant tax revenues. Moreover, these institutions place additional costs on cities through the use of

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<sup>14</sup> Judith Steinkamp, “Reshaping Town-Gown Relations,” New England Board of Higher Education (1998): 27.

<sup>15</sup> Gumprecht 70.

<sup>16</sup> Steinkamp 27.

<sup>17</sup> Weisbrod, Burton. “Towards a theory of the nonprofit sector,” Altruism, Morality and Economic Theory, New York: Russell Sage (1975).

<sup>18</sup> Kiley, Kevin. A Pseudo-taxes Debate. 2011.

public services like fire and sewage systems.<sup>19</sup> Because of universities' nonprofit status, that land remains untaxed and the potential revenue is lost.<sup>20</sup> Municipalities and residents often feel that something is owed in exchange for these lost revenues, which might otherwise finance any number of public services.<sup>21</sup> They have demanded compensation in the form of payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) and service-in-lieu-of-taxes (SILOT) programs. These demands have even been coupled with legal action seeking to revoke universities' non-profit status in order to ensure universities follow-through. This threat in turn has often spooked universities, because the loss of tax-exemption would result in donors losing their tax breaks and potentially depriving universities of major sources of funding.<sup>22</sup> The back and forth between community members and universities on this issue is actually part of a larger debate about what universities owe to their communities and to what extent they are satisfying their obligation to provide for the common good.

Another serious source of conflict has been urban renewal efforts, in which urban universities developed urban renewal programs to improve surrounding neighborhoods. These were rooted in problematic frameworks. As Judith Rodin notes, "The prevailing theory among universities was that it was appropriate to use urban renewal to rebuild and control the neighborhood, leaving 'gown' dominating, or at the very least ignoring, the needs of the town."<sup>23</sup> In renewal plans, university and city officials proposed clearing "blighted" and "eye sore" areas, reclaiming them for better use by universities.<sup>24</sup> At the University of Pennsylvania, for example, urban renewal efforts in the 1960's demolished

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<sup>19</sup> Kiley, Kevin. A Pseudo-taxes Debate. 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Bruning, McGrew and Cooper 126.

<sup>21</sup> Steinkamp 24.

<sup>22</sup> Steinkamp 24.

<sup>23</sup> Rodin, (36).

<sup>24</sup> Judith Rodin, The University & Urban Revival: Out of the Ivory Tower and into the Streets, (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 2007) 31.

block after block of West Philadelphia to make space for a multi-million dollar science center. The response to this expansion was strong, with student groups organizing protests and residents taking up arms at having been displaced.<sup>25</sup> Such conflicts involved delicate racial dynamics as well, as seen in this renewal project that left residents calling the project “Negro removal.”<sup>26</sup> A similar conflict played out in Chicago in the 1950’s and 1960’s. The Hyde Park-Kenwood Urban Renewal Plan in 1958 was the center of conflict between the University of Chicago and city residents, and again dynamics of race and class colored the conflict.<sup>27</sup> These conflicts are by no means outliers. Instead, efforts of urban renewal by universities have resulted in a number of similar conflicts, often involving similar racial and class tensions.

An important factor in the story of urban renewal efforts was the interplay of Cold War funding contracts and the development of American research universities. Penn (like Harvard, MIT, and the University of Chicago) was a “suburban-turned-urban” campus that became prominent during the Cold War.<sup>28</sup> In the immediate postwar era, Penn pursued a course towards science-based research, catering to the funding and desires of the federal defense industry. Penn, “embarked on a science-based economic development effort.”<sup>29</sup> Importantly, the context for this drive was the common story of decline and de-industrialization of American industrial cities, in which cities underwent dramatic economic and demographic changes.<sup>30</sup> West Philadelphia was a prime example, a

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<sup>25</sup> Rodin 35-36.

<sup>26</sup> Rodin 36.

<sup>27</sup> Arnold R. Hirsch, Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983) 136-138.

<sup>28</sup> Margaret P. O’Mara, Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the next Silicon Valley, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005) 61.

<sup>29</sup> O’Mara 143.

<sup>30</sup> O’Mara 152.

“microcosm of all the economic and demographic changes affecting Philadelphia.”<sup>31</sup>

Thus Penn, being situated immediately within that context, became a focus for government urban renewal efforts against blight.<sup>32</sup> The city identified two simultaneous needs: to confront urban blight, and to help Penn get more land in order for it to grow as an important economic and social institution. Thus, “urban renewal became a federal funding stream used by university administrators and the local reformers in tandem with other federal support.”<sup>33</sup> However, this is where the story turns back to town-gown conflict, as “It attempted to demographically and spatially reconfigure an urban neighborhood in a way that ignored its identity as a racially diverse, working-class community.”<sup>34</sup> Development efforts removed poor black areas and replaced them with white professionals, physically dividing the groups. While this oversimplified understanding of the story leaves out much of the contexts, actors, and details that followed, it serves to indicate how important the larger context of urban renewal efforts and Cold War funding were to engendering deeply rooted conflict between Penn and West Philadelphia.

Town-gown conflicts were rooted locally, but American society more broadly valued higher education. Boyer notes that, “Higher education and the larger purposes of American society have been – from the very first – inextricably intertwined.”<sup>35</sup> This intertwined relationship in America began with universities’ role in training clergy members in the 1700’s. After the American Revolution, the role shifted to focus on

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<sup>31</sup> O’Mara 155.

<sup>32</sup> O’Mara 155-156.

<sup>33</sup> O’Mara 158.

<sup>34</sup> O’Mara 158.

<sup>35</sup> Ernest L. Boyer, “Creating the New American College,” Chronicles of Higher Education 40.27 (1994): 1.

educating new generations to build a nation. Then came shifts towards agricultural production, scientific discovery, national defense in World War II, and peace following the war. But this tradition of service and the value Americans placed on it became strained, especially in the 1960's. Boyer pointed this out in a 1994 essay, arguing that, "higher education's historic commitment to service seems to have diminished."<sup>36</sup> Recent scholars have cited Boyer's work as a turning point, a move to improve community engagement through a greater emphasis on institutional citizenship.<sup>37</sup> Boyer calls this concept the "Scholarship of Engagement," which he defines as institutions having a larger purpose towards the improvement of the quality of life for everyone.<sup>38</sup> In other words, academic institutions have a very practical obligation to engage with and help the world around them.

Boyer's critique and plea followed from the history of uneven engagement by universities with their communities, and it succeeded in sparking renewed interest in improving that very role.<sup>39</sup> In light of the strained history of town-gown relations, universities have attempted a wide range of partnerships and community-engagement programs. In 1998, University of Massachusetts Amherst Planner Judith Steinkamp reviewed a wide range of examples of innovative and collaborative programs that spanned from cultural initiatives to economic development. In one collaboration, Hampshire College and the town of Amherst jointly planned a cultural village that included a library, studios, a community center, a conference center, and more. In New

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<sup>36</sup> Boyer 1.

<sup>37</sup> Robert G. Bringle and Julie A. Hatcher, "Campus-Community Partnerships: The Terms of Engagement," Journal of Social Issues 58.3 (2002): 504.

<sup>38</sup> Ernest L. Boyer, "Scholarship of Engagement," Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences 49.7 (1996): 32.

<sup>39</sup> Bringle and Hatcher 504.

York, the State University of New York (SUNY) coupled with New Paltz village and started the New Paltz Development Corporation to, “foster economic development initiatives.”<sup>40</sup> Clark University in Massachusetts even leveraged over \$35 million towards neighborhood revitalization and the creation of affordable housing.

Bruning, McGrew and Cooper argue that there have traditionally been two approaches to community engagement: encouraging students to enter and interact with the community or linking the university and the community to a common path through physical assets.<sup>41</sup> They propose a third framework for considering university-community engagement: from the community’s perspective. To investigate this third approach, they conducted a study in 2006, testing two hypotheses: “Those individuals who attend an event at a university will regard that university more positively on relational evaluations; and those individuals who have attended an event at the university will be more likely to indicate that the university is an asset to the community.”<sup>42</sup> They found that people who had attended an event on a university campus had much better attitudes towards the university than those who had not. Consequently, they encourage welcoming community members onto university campuses in a mutually beneficial engagement that gives community members access to valuable resources and improves the university’s reputation.

A much wider body of recent literature has investigated new models of university-community partnership in similar ways to Bruning, McGrew and Cooper. However, the underlying problems and questions of town-gown relations persist in similar ways. What do universities owe their neighbors? How can academic institutions play a role in

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<sup>40</sup> Steinkamp 25.

<sup>41</sup> Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper 126.

<sup>42</sup> Bruning, McGrew and Cooper 127.

revitalizing and improving their communities? How can universities overcome the physical and non-physical barriers between themselves and their neighbors?

There is a rich history in both town-gown conflict and cooperation, as seen in this body of literature. Understanding the traditional tensions provides valuable insights into specific case studies of town-gown conflict. With this framework in mind, I turn now to examine the Mayor's Scholarship controversy between the University of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia. In order to investigate this topic, I conducted my own primary research, as laid out in the following section.

### III. Research Methodology

The Mayor's Scholarship controversy has three main components: the historical timeline of events, the surrounding tensions and opinions on those events, and the fallout from the controversy. That timeline includes legal decisions, protests, University action, and more. The opinions refer to individual perspectives about those events. Lastly, the fallout includes changes to Penn-Philadelphia relations, changes at Penn, and adjustments to the Mayor's Scholarship program. To investigate these elements I utilized three main methods of research: archival research, newspaper analysis, and interviews.

To examine the historical facts, I performed archival research in the Philadelphia City Archives. There I found press releases, correspondences, financial records, application forms, and more that provided me with an understanding of the history of the Mayor's Scholarship. This primary evidence helped me to construct an objective storyline. Simultaneously, I used newspaper publications to construct a complimentary timeline of events.

To understand opinions on the matter, I collected and analyzed articles from Philadelphia publications that related to my topic. I used keyword searches for “Mayor’s Scholarship” and collected relevant articles from the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Daily Pennsylvanian. I chose these because they provided coverage about the controversy from two perspectives: citywide and Penn’s Campus. Since the first coverage of the topic, 139 articles have been published in the Daily Pennsylvanian and Philadelphia Inquirer either about or in reference to the Mayor’s Scholarship controversy. Of the 139 articles, 123 were published between 1991 and 1995, while the lawsuit was ongoing. The wide range of coverage provided me with the qualitative evidence to corroborate and elaborate on the historical timeline of events. Analyzing these articles as a body of primary source data revealed key insights into what was going on surrounding this complicated controversy, and provided insight into how different constituents reacted to the controversy. Different articles introduced tensions, dynamics, opinions, and arguments that added color to the raw timeline.

Lastly, I conducted interviews. In order to determine who to interview, I charted the different parties who had stakes and involvement in the controversy: Penn as an institution, individuals associated with Penn (students, faculty, etc.), The Mayor’s Office, City Council, the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia (the organization that brought the law suit), Philadelphia residents, and specifically West Philadelphia residents as immediate neighbors to Penn. Obtaining a representative samples of interviews from this wide variety of actors from over 20 years ago proved difficult. Thus, I ultimately used the newspaper articles as the primary source for understanding general opinions on the controversy, and used interviews with key individuals to gain greater insight and



specific perspectives. I started with faculty and staff at Penn. I interviewed the archivist, several professors, and the founder of the Netter Center for Community Partnership. I also interviewed the former Executive Director and a lead lawyer of the case at PILCOP.

In conducting these interviews, I tailored my questions to their unique position. I began broadly, asking what the interviewee knew about the topic. After they had offered their relevant information, I followed up with more pointed questions about my topic. I asked what significance the controversy had, what their personal take on it was, if they noticed any changes following the lawsuit, etc.

Conducting these interviews involved several tradeoffs. I have benefited from personal takes on the events, perspectives on the relative importance of what transpired, personal anecdotes, and being connected with other people to interview or sources to investigate. I have gained a richer understanding of the significance of the Mayor's Scholarships, as well as some insight into the divergent sides of the same story. The tradeoff has been a limited or biased perspective based on who I have been able to access. While I gained perspectives from the defendants and the plaintiffs, I did not gain personal accounts from individuals outside of the lawsuit. This is where the publications became important, as the research done by those authors directly presented the views of those two constituents.

These three methods of primary research are complimented by research into secondary sources that deal with the larger contexts of my topic. Town and Gown relations and histories of Penn's relationship with West Philadelphia are two examples of such contextualization.

## IV. Background

### A. HISTORY OF THE MAYOR'S SCHOLARSHIP

In 1882, the University of Pennsylvania entered an agreement, in which the city transferred land to the university in exchange for the creation of 50 scholarships called the Board of Education Scholarships. These scholarships were awarded each year to deserving students from Philadelphia schools, for a total of 50 scholars at any given time, and each scholarship would cover full tuition. At the time, University tuition was \$150 per year, so the total scholarship budget was \$7,500 annually.<sup>43</sup>

In 1910, a new ordinance was passed that again traded city land for Penn scholarships. In exchange for 50 acres for land, the University agreed to additionally: “Establish and forever maintain seventy-five (75) free scholarships in any of the Departments of the University, to be awarded by the Mayor of the City to deserving students of all the schools of Philadelphia.”<sup>44</sup> The scholarships from this ordinance became known as the Mayor's Scholarships, and they were similarly to be full-tuition scholarships awarded to a total of 75 students from Philadelphia. Thus, in conjunction with the former ordinance, there were supposed to be a total of 125 scholarships at any time at Penn.

In 1977, Penn entered into a new agreement with the city. This agreement became necessary because Penn sought permission from the city to mortgage the traded land from the 1882 and 1910 ordinances. These ordinances had provisions preventing Penn from mortgaging the land without first seeking permission, in order to ensure that the university wouldn't just flip the land for profit. Later, Penn sought to mortgage the land

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<sup>43</sup> University of Pennsylvania, *Almanac* 39.24 (2 March, 1993).

<sup>44</sup> City of Philadelphia, Land Ordinance of 1910, 137.

as backing for a loan it intended to use for renovations on existing buildings and construction of new medical facilities for the School of Medicine and the Medical Center anchored by the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>45</sup> Thus, it had to enter negotiations with the city to change the original ordinance that prevented such mortgaging. Out of these negotiations, a new ordinance was enacted in 1977. This 1977 ordinance became the centerpiece of the entire controversy that would follow just over a decade later. The new ordinance consolidated those from 1882 and 1910, and stated:

...in lieu of the obligation to establish and maintain at least fifty free scholarships of an annual value of not less than seven thousand five hundred (\$7,500) dollars per annum imposed by Ordinance approved January 24, 1882, and in lieu of the obligation to establish and maintain seventy free scholarships in any of the departments of the University to be awarded by the Mayor of Philadelphia to deserving students of all of the schools of the City imposed by an Ordinance approved June 15, 1910...<sup>46</sup>

...The university shall agree to establish and forever maintain at least 125, four-year, full tuition scholarships, or their equivalent . . . to be awarded annually . . . to deserving students from all of the schools of the city.”<sup>47</sup>

By this ordinance, the University was supposed to provide 125 full-tuition scholarships to deserving Philadelphia students.

In 1989, PILCOP came to the University claiming that they had discovered Penn’s violation of the law governing the scholarships. They claimed that Penn had been in violation of the scholarship agreement since 1977, providing 125 scholarships every four years as opposed to 125 per year. Thus, the University owed damages totaling millions of dollars extending over 12 years. The law center said they would forgive the past damages if Penn agreed to move to 500 scholarships total, instead of the 125 then being awarded. Penn considered this proposal, but ultimately declined, believing the case

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<sup>45</sup> Mark Lloyd, Personal Interview, 5 September 2015.

<sup>46</sup> City of Philadelphia. Ordinance of 1977.

<sup>47</sup> Penn., “Council to hold hearing,” Daily Pennsylvanian, 1992,

did not have enough legal traction to win in court.<sup>48</sup> Two years later, in 1991, PILCOP filed a class-action lawsuit against the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. The suit alleged that the University was not living up to the agreement for the Mayor's Scholarship set out by the 1977 Ordinance. PILCOP, along with 12 individual plaintiffs and 14 organizational plaintiffs, believed that Penn was required to award 125 scholarships each year, for a total of 500 scholarships at any given time. This interpretation came from a wording in the 1977 ordinance that read, to be awarded annually,"<sup>49</sup> indicating to the plaintiffs that 125 new scholarships were to be given each year. Additionally, the suit alleged that the University was underfunding and failing to provide full scholarships even to those students receiving the Mayor's Scholarship.

In the late winter of 1992, Penn sought to circumvent the problem by fixing the wording of the law. From their interpretation, the number of scholarships had always been 125 and was not supposed to change in 1977. Thus, they sought to change the law at a public hearing at City Hall. It was at this hearing that extreme emotions and supercharged tensions surrounding the conflict emerged. Mark Lloyd, the University Archivist, recalls attending the hearing to support the then University of Pennsylvania's President Hackney. As he spoke, a group of community members who had gathered to oppose Penn began interrupting President Hackney. They continued to the point where the President's speech was fully interrupted and brought to a close.<sup>50</sup> This dramatic public display of opposition was characteristic of the tensions surrounding the legal battle. Penn's effort to change the law was defeated, and the legal proceedings continued.

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<sup>48</sup> Mark Lloyd, Personal Interview 3 December 2015.

<sup>49</sup> City of Philadelphia, Ordinance of 1977.

<sup>50</sup> Mark Lloyd, Personal Interview 5 September 2015.

In April of 1992, Common Pleas Court Judge Nelson A. Diaz dismissed the case because the City and the Mayor had to be parties involved in the suit. Judge Diaz said that they could be brought in as either defendants or plaintiffs.<sup>51</sup> The lawsuit was refilled soon after with Mayor Ed Rendell, the City Commissioner of public property, the city of Philadelphia, and members of the Mayor's Scholarship committee all as defendants.<sup>52</sup> In September of that year, Judge Diaz ruled that the case would go to trial.<sup>53</sup>

The legal battle waged on for months, embroiled in tensions and public debate. In February of 1993, Judge Diaz released a decision. In his Order and Opinion, he ruled that the plaintiffs had no standing on the matter, thus upholding the University's position. The order read: "it is hereby ORDERED AND DECREED that Plaintiffs Petition for an Injunction and Specific Relief is DENIED, since none of the plaintiffs have standing."<sup>54</sup> However, in this decision, judge Diaz also criticized Penn heavily. He noted that the university had violated the ordinance in a number of ways, including: the awarding of loans in place of grant in aid, the awarding of partial scholarships, the awarding of scholarships for only portions of the academic year, and more.<sup>55</sup> Diaz even went so far as to call the Mayor's Scholarship, "A sham in the name of a scholarship."<sup>56</sup>

This decision did not put an end to the lawsuit. An appeal was filed soon after in March of 1993. The case went back to court in October, and an appeals court upheld Judge Diaz' decision in December of 1994. An additional appeal was refiled, but the

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<sup>51</sup> Huntly Collins, "Penn Scholarship suit is dismissed by judge," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1992.

<sup>52</sup> Michael Coakley, "Lawsuit over Penn scholarships refilled," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1992.

<sup>53</sup> Dale Mezzacappa, "Lawsuit over scholarships go to trial," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1992.

<sup>54</sup> University of Pennsylvania, *Almanac* 39.24 (2 March 1993).

<sup>55</sup> University of Pennsylvania, *Almanac* 39.24 (2 March 1993).

<sup>56</sup> Michael Brus, "Gala reception honors newest Mayor's Scholars," *Daily Pennsylvanian*, 1997.

ruling was upheld and the case finally came to a conclusion in May of 1995.<sup>57</sup> When the legal battle finally settled, the plaintiffs had failed in their suit and Penn continued to uphold its legal position of owing 125 scholarships. However, the results of the larger political and ideological battle fought were much less clear. I will focus on these larger issues in the following data analysis.

## V. Data, Discussion, and Analysis

### A. MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS

The Mayor's Scholarship controversy first entered the public arena in October of 1991, when the Daily Pennsylvanian ran an article titled, "U. May Face Scholarship Suit."<sup>58</sup> In the following data and discussion, I will summarize my findings from the newspaper research and organize that data through a series of claims and sub-claims. By following these claims, I will demonstrate two conclusions. First that, while the legal basis for the lawsuit was the number of scholarships being provided, the real support for the lawsuit was built on much larger issues. Secondly, that the debates around this lawsuit are representative of larger trends in town-gown relations.

#### *Data and Discussion*

Wide coverage of The Mayor's Scholarship resulted in numerous public criticisms of the University for its stance. One common argument accused Penn of failing to uphold its obligation even under its own, narrower interpretation of the city ordinance. While Penn argued that it only owed 125 scholarships at any given time, critics argued the university wasn't even supplying that many or in the right manner. During the lawsuit, the plaintiffs submitted data showing the University had fallen short of the total 125

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<sup>57</sup> Joshua Fineman, "Mayor's Scholars court case end," Daily Pennsylvanian, 1995.

<sup>58</sup> Penn. "U. May face scholarship suit," Daily Pennsylvanian, 1991.

scholarships. Between 1986 and 1990, there were allegedly only between 71.6 and 105.7 active Mayor's Scholarships (according to the value of full tuition scholarships, not number of scholars).<sup>59</sup> Similarly, the plaintiffs alleged that overall numbers of Philadelphia students dropped from 164 to 75 between 1978 and 1990. This occurred even while the size of Penn's freshman class increased.<sup>60</sup> Finally, even those students receiving the scholarship were allegedly being shortchanged. One example of this was Maurice Enoch, a Penn student in 1988 whose Mayor's Scholarship disappeared after his freshman year.<sup>61</sup> Whether by the total numbers of scholarships, admitting too few city students, reneging on already admitted scholars, or failing to recruit city students, critics argued that Penn was underproviding all around.

Beyond that criticism, many others supported the central claim of the lawsuit: that Penn actually owed four times as many scholarships as they claimed to owe. While Penn conceded that the ordinance wording was ambiguous, its critics argued both that the wording was clear and that it was an intentional expansion of the program. These arguments had a range of proponents, including City Council members. City solicitor Sheldon Albert testified that the ordinance was an intentional increase in the number of scholarships, not just an ambiguous wording.<sup>62</sup> Michael Churchill, another attorney with PILCOP, echoed this sentiment when I spoke with him years later. He reasoned that the original ordinances established not just a number of scholarships, but a proportion of Philadelphia students to non-Philadelphia students at Penn. Thus, with the school having quadrupled in size by 1976, Churchill reasoned that the 1977 redrafted ordinance was an

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<sup>59</sup> Huntly Collins, "Penn savaged and supported," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1992.

<sup>60</sup> Collins, "Penn savaged and supported"

<sup>61</sup> Huntly Collins, "Critics decry Penn's outreach," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1991.

<sup>62</sup> Vernon Loeb, "Penn case divides Mayor's testimony," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1992.

intentional readjustment of the Mayor's Scholarship to maintain the originally intended proportion of Philadelphia students. He said, "That was when the U was essentially a quarter of the size of what it was in 1976. And that's why we thought it was certainly very logical that when they were redoing the ordinance in 76 you would want to make it somewhat proportional to what it was before."<sup>63</sup> While a valid and logical argument, this was speculative regarding the intention of the 1977 Ordinance. It was that intention, in part, that came under scrutiny in the courtroom.

Building on the arguments about the number of scholarships being offered, critics expanded to condemn Penn's interest in the educational landscape and student body of Philadelphia more generally. They argued that Penn didn't value Philadelphia students. They cited declining percentages of Philadelphia students, showing that as few as 22 of Penn's 1991 freshman class of 2,315 were actually graduates of Philadelphia high schools.<sup>64</sup> When Penn argued that there weren't enough qualified students to fulfill 500 scholarships, the plaintiffs refuted that claim as well. Frances Walker, the executive director of one of the organizational plaintiffs, testified, "We are here to tell you and the people of our city that there are more than enough very well qualified Philadelphia schoolchildren who can meet Ivy League standards."<sup>65</sup> This was echoed by Superintendent Constance Clayton who said there were, "more than enough qualified students."<sup>66</sup> The plaintiffs cited performance data on SAT tests that demonstrated the ample supply of qualified students.<sup>67</sup> The problem was insufficient effort on behalf of Penn to recruit from Philadelphia schools, rather than an insufficient numbers of qualified

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<sup>63</sup> Michael Churchill, Personal Interview, 22 September 2015.

<sup>64</sup> Huntly Collins, "A University's obligation to local students," Philadelphia Inquirer, 1991.

<sup>65</sup> Huntly Collins, "Scholarship demands reaffirmed," Philadelphia Inquirer, 1992.

<sup>66</sup> Huntly Collins, "Penn savaged and supported," Philadelphia Inquirer, 1992.

<sup>67</sup> Collins, "Scholarship demands reaffirmed."



students in those schools. Plaintiffs testified that they were never informed of the scholarship, that it was not advertised, and that they would have applied had they known of the program.<sup>68 69</sup> A principal of a local Girls High school commented that, "The University is a jewel in the crown of the city... We are very disappointed that we did not have the opportunity to hear from recruiters [from the University]."<sup>70</sup> The larger problem, Churchill alleged, was that, "Penn has turned its back on the City of Philadelphia."<sup>71</sup> More recently, Churchill reiterated these sentiments to me in an interview, in which he recalled, "...a strong sense that the University was not paying attention to the educational needs of the community that was around it. And many of the labor personnel that we were in touch with were actually West Philadelphia residents and concerned with the huge disparity between the academic excellence and wealth of the U and the failing schools that were all around."<sup>72</sup>

Well beyond arguing about the number of scholarships, the lawsuit also introduced a host of related accusations and arguments. Penn's position as a nonprofit institution free from property taxes came in to play, as did the amount of money from the university's budget being dedicated to scholarships. University President Sheldon Hackney argued that adjusting the scholarships to the proposed 500 would force Penn to abandon need-blind admissions and financial aid policies.<sup>73</sup> But Gilhool with PILCOP said this was "nonsense," citing the overall size of Penn's budget. Penn's operating budget at the time was \$1.3 billion, so the increased \$7 million would be just .5% of that

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<sup>68</sup> Collins, "Critics decry Penn's local outreach."

<sup>69</sup> Collins, "Scholarship demands reaffirmed."

<sup>70</sup> Daily Pennsylvanian, "Witnesses: U. Guilty of racism," *Daily Pennsylvanian*, 1992.

<sup>71</sup> Howard Goodman, "Suit fails to win more aid," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1993.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Churchill, Personal Interview, 22 September 2015.

<sup>73</sup> Huntly Collins, "A University's obligation to local students," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1991.

budget. This perspective was an oversimplification of the budget and amount of funding available to undergraduate financial aid, but sought to point out the relatively small percentage of funding needed compared to larger financial activities of the University. Moreover, Gilhool emphasized that this was less than the real estate taxes Penn was not paying due to its tax-exempt status.<sup>74</sup> Additionally, Churchill situated the conflict with larger trends of Penn moving its focus away from Philadelphia. He said, “Penn was essentially trying to reorient itself from a school that was so highly identified with both the Philadelphia area and with PA and consequently we discovered they were making more efforts to recruit in California than they were in Pennsylvania in terms of the number of recruiters from the admissions office and the number of people they were actually getting applications from.”<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, many supporters of the lawsuit really saw it as a fight against Penn as an institution and discussed the University’s broader social responsibilities and role in the city. Gilhool commented that, “Penn’s collaborative programs with the Philadelphia School District are wonderful, but they are no substitute for fulfilling the university’s central obligation under the law.”<sup>76</sup> Others were even more aggressive, like James Gray, co-chairman of the African American Association that was an organizational plaintiff in the suit. The group represented black faculty, administrators and staff at Penn, and Gray said they jumped on the chance to join the suit. “We know that Penn is not fulfilling its social responsibilities...It’s going for the elite or top students, not bringing in the students with moderate grade averages who have the capacity to do the work here. As a result,

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<sup>74</sup> Collins, “A University’s obligation to local students.”

<sup>75</sup> Michael Churchill, Personal Interview, 22 September 2015.

<sup>76</sup> Huntly Collins, “A University’s obligation to local students,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 1991.

they are not recruiting from the neighborhood high schools.”<sup>77</sup> And Gray wasn’t the only one to discuss the importance of race in regards to the lawsuit. As the Daily Pennsylvanian reported, “Former Director of Minority Recruitment Carol Black and former financial aid and admissions officer William Adams testified against the University, saying that the University was racist and inconsiderate in its recruiting efforts.”<sup>78</sup> Churchill echoed this idea in speaking with me. He noted a racial disparity in the group of Mayor’s Scholars, “...for the most part white kids.”<sup>79</sup> He said that, “high proportions of the minorities they included were foreign born African students. The number of African American students was low.”<sup>80</sup>

Additionally, critics accused Penn of playing a political game with the lawsuit. Charles Bowser, a lawyer and former deputy mayor, said: “Penn made a deal, and now they want to get out of it. How do you get out of it? You use your clout.”<sup>81</sup> Lastly throughout the process, citizens were frustrated that Penn continued to disregard the voices of the citizenry. Frances Walker of Parents Against Drugs, another organizational plaintiff, said, “I’m a citizen of Philadelphia, and the university has totally disregarded the community. We haven’t been involved in any negotiations with the university. They made sure we weren’t involved in it. It was done just like everything else they do, in closed rooms without the citizens involved.”<sup>82</sup>

Just as critics brought a wave of arguments against Penn, the University and its supporters provided a range of defenses. The most central defensive argument was that

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<sup>77</sup> Collins, “Critics decry Penn’s local outreach.”

<sup>78</sup> Daily Pennsylvanian, “Witnesses: U guilty of racism,” Daily Pennsylvanian, 1992.

<sup>79</sup> Michael Churchill, Personal Interview, 22 September 2015.

<sup>80</sup> Michael Churchill, Personal Interview, 22 September 2015.

<sup>81</sup> Collins, “Penn savaged and supported.”

<sup>82</sup> Doreen Carvajal, “Penn, city reach deal,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 1992.

the allegations about the number of scholarships were incorrect. They claimed the ordinance was always intended to provide 125 scholarships at any given time, not 500. Officials acknowledge that the 1977 Ordinance contained ambiguous wording, but that the intention was not ambiguous. The intention was always to provide 125 scholarships.<sup>83</sup> The defendants argued that the quadrupling of such a scholarship would have merited significant publicity and necessitated many substantive changes. Penn's attorney in the case, Arthur Makadon, argued that "If the city administration under Frank Rizzo had extracted from the university a commitment to quadruple from 125 to 500 the amount of financial aid that was legally required to go to Philadelphians, why didn't Frank Rizzo publicize it?"<sup>84</sup> Moreover, none of the intervening Mayors (Frank Rizzo, Willlian Green, Wilson Goode, and Ed Rendell) believed the University violated the 1977 agreement.<sup>85</sup> President Hackney said Penn's position came from a long-standing understanding of the number of scholarships. A former correspondence in 1962 between Mayor James H.J. Tate and Penn President Harnwell detailed the agreed upon number.<sup>86</sup> The Ordinance of 1977 was supposed to do nothing more than consolidate the Board of Education Scholarship with the Mayor's Scholarship. Hackney and Penn were continuing to do what they had agreed upon in the 1962 correspondence with Mayor Tate, and the 1977 Ordinance should have had no bearing on that agreement. Lastly, the defendants believed that the plaintiffs had no standing in the case, or in other words no stake in the issue to warrant their involvement.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Collins, "A University's obligation to local students."

<sup>84</sup> Howard Goodman, "Suit fails to win more aid," Philadelphia Inquirer, 1993.

<sup>85</sup> Collins, "Penn scholarship suit is dismissed."

<sup>86</sup> Collins, "A University's obligation to local students."

<sup>87</sup> Collins, "Penn scholarship suit is dismissed."

Furthermore, the University argued that a shift from 125 to 500 scholarships was financially unfeasible. Such a shift, given the current tuition rates and student body size, would cause drastic and damaging changes to how Penn awards financial aid and scholarships across the University. Hackney believed Penn would have to abandon need-blind admission and financial aid policies, given that the proposed change to the scholarships would cost \$7 million, or a 20% increase in the specific budget for such grants.<sup>88</sup>

Penn and its supporters also defended themselves by pointing out how much good the university was doing at the time. This, they argued, was true both in terms of the Mayor's Scholarship and the range of other programs and efforts across the city. Coverage from the time noted how "University of Pennsylvania views itself as a champion of the Philadelphia public schools... Penn's outreach programs to the Philadelphia School District are regarded as among the most extensive at any elite private university in the country."<sup>89</sup> These programs range from tutoring to financing schools.<sup>90</sup> Carol Stoel from the American Association for Higher Education noted, "What Penn is doing is one of the most important examples of college-city collaboration that we have anywhere in the country, especially at a school of Penn's caliber."<sup>91</sup> Some members of the Philadelphia community even regarded Penn as friend and partner, working to "improve elementary and secondary schools in West Philadelphia."<sup>92</sup> In regards to the contemporary Mayor's Scholarships, Penn said that 162 Mayor's Scholars received a

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<sup>88</sup> Collins, "A University's obligation to local students."

<sup>89</sup> Collins, "A University's obligation to local students."

<sup>90</sup> Collins, "A University's obligation to local students."

<sup>91</sup> Collins, "A University's obligation to local students."

<sup>92</sup> Collins, "Penn savaged and supported."

total of grants \$1.6 million.<sup>93</sup> President Hackney called Penn's efforts around the Mayor's Scholarship, "the floor of our support for Philadelphia students and not the ceiling."<sup>94</sup>

Most of the arguments seen in the *Inquirer* and *Daily Pennsylvanian* discussed the relative merits of the positions of each side of the lawsuit. This was the public parallel to what was occurring within the court room. However, this public discussion added an additional layer of depth. While the details of the suit are nothing new, especially for anyone who lived through the controversy, the broader conflicts provide new and unique insight into the whole controversy. Indeed, they provide insight into the ever-changing relationship between Penn and Philadelphia. Many journalists and citizens saw the conflict as a small representation of larger battles being fought. Ultimately, regardless of the lawsuit details, Philadelphians seemed to believe that "Penn can do more."<sup>95</sup> One reporter claimed that, "Apart from the legal issues, what is really at stake in the lawsuit is a more far-reaching issue: How can elite private universities with national student bodies and stiff entrance requirements do a better job of enrolling needy students from their own communities?"<sup>96</sup> People believed that, "it [Penn] has a moral and legal responsibility to do so...it is an educational issue of great importance to the high school students in the city...The real issue is that the university should be doing more to improve the educational environment for city students, including increasing the number it admits. That should be the bottom line."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Goodman, "Suit fails to win more aid.

<sup>94</sup> Carvajal, "Penn, City reach deal."

<sup>95</sup> Acel Moore, "Penn can do more," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1992.

<sup>96</sup> Collins, "A university's obligation to local students."

<sup>97</sup> Moore, "Penn can do more."

Newspaper article analysis and interviews reveal that the scholarship lawsuit was by no means isolated to the legal issue of a number of scholarships. Rather, it was an expression of built up tensions, a platform for change, and a case study in how conflict arises between urban universities and their neighbors. Consequently, although the plaintiffs lost in court, they nonetheless succeeded in creating conversation and change about important related issues.

### *Analysis*

The first conclusion I drew is that the widespread support for this scholarship suit was rooted in much larger issues than any specific number of scholarships. As a basis, yes, supporters of the lawsuit criticized Penn for not providing 500 scholarships, for not even providing the 125 they purported to owe, and for underfunding existing scholarships. More than that, though, supporters believed Penn had no interest in the education of Philadelphia students. In my own analysis of these arguments, it is apparent that this claim cannot be logically isolated to the 125 extra scholarships to be offered or not offered each year. In the larger landscape of education in Philadelphia, this set of scholarships is but a drop in the bucket. However, Penn's critics viewed this disparity as an example of their already existing grievances against Penn on the issue of education. Secondly, the cooperation between Penn and the city administration during the lawsuit came under heavy fire. This again is not really about the specifics of their cooperation, but about the power imbalance. Residents resented Penn's political clout, and the collusion of two powerful players without inclusion of the citizenry. Thirdly, Philadelphians were expressing their frustrations about Penn not having to pay taxes, money that, if collected, would likely directly benefit city residents. If Penn wasn't

paying millions in land taxes, how can it fight against directing more funds towards Philadelphia students? Lastly, there was a general expression of frustration at Penn for, as critics seemed to think, not doing enough for the city. Again, while the difference between 500 and 125 student scholarship is financially and socially significant, it is not in itself really evidence to claim Penn does not do ‘enough’ for the city. In reality, it was a grievance exemplary of larger frustrations having to do with wealth and power.

The second conclusion I drew is that the tensions played out during the lawsuit controversy were representative of larger trends. Reviewing the literature of town-gown relations, several relevant key tensions emerge: distinctions of privilege, the notion of the city as an obligation for the university, racial imbalances, tax exemption, and education. These different factors played out quite clearly in the lawsuit and related opinions expressed. Penn was keeping the citizenry out, not involving them in negotiations, continuing the history of isolationism and elitism. Discussion around what Penn owed can easily be framed as an obligation the University had to the city as a client, and to what extent that was contractually being fulfilled or not. Changing demographics earlier in Penn’s history set a great racial and socioeconomic imbalance as context for this controversy, and Penn came under fire for not recruiting enough minority students and for employing racist recruiting practices. While Penn defended itself by saying the lawsuit was asking for something financially impossible, critics expressed frustration at the significance of the financial benefit Penn enjoyed from not paying land taxes, and thus that it would be reasonable to divert those funds to scholarships. Lastly, as per the call to action by Boyer, debate raged around how the University could be more engaged, a better citizen. Specifically, how its educational and research interests could align with



and benefit the surrounding community. Most all of the discussions that arose alongside the lawsuit fell into larger historical or modern contexts of town-gown relations.

## B. LASTING CHANGES AT PENN

### *No-Loan Packages*

The first direct consequence of the Mayor's Scholarship controversy was a change to the financial aid packages offered to Mayor's Scholars. Before the lawsuit, receiving a scholarship involved taking on large loans. Thus, there were still significant barriers and difficulties in paying tuition for lower-income students, even with a Mayor's Scholarship. However, the lawsuit brought light to this issue. As a direct result, Penn changed its aid packages for Mayor's Scholars in the early 90s.<sup>98</sup> The new packages were no-loan packages, thus carrying greater meaning in the lives of selected students.

Years later, Penn actually changed all of its undergraduate financial aid packages to no-loan ones. Between 2008-2009, the University began rolling out these packages to its lower-income students. It was able to do so from the success of larger capital campaigns that financed a larger undergraduate aid budget. While the Mayor's Scholarship no-loan packages were a predecessor of these broadly used no-loan aid packages, the two were not linked directly. Rather, the Mayor's Scholarship was just an early example of the no-loan financial aid packages used today. The direct impact of the Mayor's Scholarship lawsuit on financial aid was limited to changing the packages Mayor's Scholars received.

### *Community Partnerships*

A second consequence of the Mayor's Scholarship controversy was a shift in the University's approach to community concerns. This can be seen specifically in the

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<sup>98</sup> William Schilling, Personal Interview, 14 December 2015.

evolution of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships that occurred during this time. In the summer of 1991, Penn professors Ira Harkavy, Francis Johnston, Jane Low, Dr. John Puckett, and Presidential Chief Assistant John Gould traveled to Stanford, California to develop plans for a center for community partnership. That winter, President Sheldon Hackney announced the official plans for the Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) to a meeting of trustees on Founder's Day.<sup>99</sup> The plans had been in the works well before the Mayor's Scholarship lawsuit, but were not officially announced until February, while the lawsuit had been filed in October. This overlap has appeared to some to be directly linked, but in fact the creation of the center was an independent action.

However, the overlapping timelines and the lawsuit did have profound impact on the evolution of the CCP. In an interview with me, Professor Harkavy noted how:

There is no question that the issue of how the center of Community Partnership, the form it ultimately took, was influenced. It was going to happen anyway; but because of the Mayor's Scholarship, the center's range of activities was in fact expanded and made more central to the institution... So it raised it up... It moved from largely an academic service function, to also do economic community development and issues of employment.<sup>100</sup>

Professor Harkavy also recalled how, sometime after the scholarship suit, he sat with President Hackney and Executive Vice President Marna Whittington in the White Dog Café and proposed the need, “for the center to be engaged with these broader questions of economic and community development and concerns about employment, as well as what we were doing with academics.”<sup>101</sup> Both parties agreed, and the scope of the CCP expanded as previously described.

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<sup>99</sup> Ira Harkavy, Personal Interview, 6 October 2015.

<sup>100</sup> Ira Harkavy, Personal Interview, 6 October 2015.

<sup>101</sup> Ira Harkavy, Personal Interview, 6 October 2015.

The connection between the center's mission/function and the Mayor's Scholarship suit is not supported by Professor Harkavy's personal opinion alone. In fact, a marked change can be seen from early internal planning documents for the CCP. In October of 1992, Professor Harkavy released an Internal Discussion Draft that outlined the Mission for the CCP. The plans for the center had been in the works for some time by this point in 1992, and given the ongoing proceedings of the lawsuit, it seems unlikely that any changes had yet been implemented in the Center's design. This 25-page draft detailed Penn's mission, the mission of the center, the structure of the center, and tentative plans for 1992-1993.<sup>102</sup>

There is a very obvious focus on Penn as a research institution, and its "major emphasis on service and on efforts to integrate the research, teaching, and service missions of the university...the three triads."<sup>103</sup> The draft notes how Penn's efforts will:

...result in the progressive reinvention of the American university...the Center for Community Partnership may be conceptualized as part of Penn's effort to provide a model of a university for the twenty-first century – a university that places the service mission at the heart of its research and teaching missions, and advances knowledge by helping to find solutions to what Dewey termed the 'dilemmas' and 'perplexities' of our time.<sup>104</sup>

This draft certainly places an emphasis on social responsibility, the "institution's obligation to be a good citizen, and its pedagogic duty to provide models of responsible citizenship for its students."<sup>105</sup> However, that emphasis changed over the following two years.

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<sup>102</sup> Ira Harkavy, "CCP Internal Draft Discussion," (1992) 1.

<sup>103</sup> Harkavy, "CCP Internal Draft Discussion," 2.

<sup>104</sup> Ira Harkavy, "Briefing Paper on the Mission of the Center for Community Partnerships," (1994) 5-6.

<sup>105</sup> Harkavy, "CCP Internal Draft Discussion," 9.

In August of 1994, Professor Harkavy released a draft of a Briefing Paper on the Mission of the CCP, a follow up to the internal draft. This draft sent a different message, while still working within the same context and guidelines. Harkavy establishes that, “Penn’s future and the future of West Philadelphia/Philadelphia are intertwined,”<sup>106</sup> and that conditions of the city were deteriorating. Then, he confronts two predominant beliefs: that either nothing can be done to ameliorate declining conditions, or that Penn itself can not improve declining conditions.<sup>107</sup> Here is where the readjusted mission of the center comes through, as Harkavy responds:

The Center is founded upon a very different notion – a notion that Penn can lead the way toward revitalizing West Philadelphia/Philadelphia. Its leadership role derives from its status as an international research university with extraordinary intellectual resources, its position as the most prestigious institution in the city, as well as the city’s largest private employer. Appropriately organized and directed, Penn’s range of resources can serve as the catalytic agent for galvanizing other institutions as well as government itself in concerted efforts to improve the quality of life in West Philadelphia/Philadelphia.<sup>108</sup>

Harkavy goes on to explicitly mention economic community development and education as programmatic elements of the center, as per his discussion with President Hackney.

It is important to note that much of the rest of the proposals’ content remained consistent: emphasis on service, research, leadership, etc. However, the subtle but marked change in mission emphasis combined with Harkavy’s personal testimony demonstrate that the Mayor’s Scholarship did indeed have a profound impact on this important institution within Penn. Moreover, this consequence is particularly significant given the Center’s ongoing prominent role today as, “Penn’s primary vehicle for bringing to bear the broad range of human knowledge needed to solve the complex, comprehensive, and

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<sup>106</sup> Harkavy, “Briefing Paper on the Mission of the Center for Community Partnerships,” 1.

<sup>107</sup> Harkavy, “Briefing Paper on the Mission of the Center for Community Partnerships,” 2.

<sup>108</sup> Harkavy, “Briefing Paper on the Mission of the Center for Community Partnerships,” 2.

interconnected problems of the American city so that West Philadelphia (Penn's local geographic community), Philadelphia, the University itself, and society benefit."<sup>109</sup>

Having shifted and broadened the focus of the center and encouraged its central role to university functioning and having shifted undergraduate financial aid practices, the Mayor's Scholarship suit has had an important lasting impact on the University of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia.

## VI. Conclusion

The lawsuit and ensuing controversy around the Mayor's Scholarship caused tension between Penn and Philadelphia for four years. The ongoing legal battles, more than one hundred public articles, demonstrations, and discussions engrossed the campus and city. But at the end of the day, the battle was fought about much more than the difference of 375 scholarships. Rather, the whole conflict was a manifestation of much larger and ongoing issues. Race, class, physical expansion, educational access, and more emerged as important points of tension. Additionally, these tensions were not isolated to Penn, but were rather representative of broader issues between town and gown. While PILCOP and the plaintiffs ultimately lost the lawsuit, they did achieve notable successes. They fostered conversation around education and Penn's role in the city, they shined light on Penn's failures to fulfill the base requirements to even their 125 scholars, they changed the financial packages awarded to Mayor's Scholars, and they positively impacted the scope of action and responsibility of Penn's Netter Center for Community Partnerships.

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<sup>109</sup> "Welcome to the Netter Center," Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships, 16 December 2015, <https://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/>.

This historical account of the Mayor's Scholarship controversy has not voiced any new facts or occurrences. In isolated spaces and different ways, these same points were echoed by people on the ground at the time of the controversy. But with the distance of time and a broader perspective, I have sought to unite different perspectives and histories to provide a greater understanding of the controversy that unfolded. In particular, I hope to have shined a light on why Philadelphians were so outraged over the missing scholarships. While the legal battle centered on a specific ordinance and number of scholarships, the larger battle leveraged that suit as a platform for critique. Additionally, few people outside of the inner discussion and planning groups had insight into the impact of the lawsuit on the founding of the Netter Center. However, my conclusions are limited by my research methods. Broader and deeper understanding could be drawn by interviewing individuals from all different stakeholder groups, paying special attention to Philadelphians living in the city in the early 90s. Hearing their stories might have revealed other qualms or tensions unrepresented in media outlets.

Lastly, the continued significance of this piece of research lies in considerations of town-gown relations today. In particular, parallels can be extended to the modern debate over nonprofit organizations' satisfactory (or unsatisfactory) contributions to the public good in American society. As debates rage nationally over universities' nonprofit status and PILOTS, this case study can provide a nuanced lens. Just as this scholarship controversy was not limited to a number of scholarships, the debate over PILOTS is not only about a sum of money. Instead, it is about the large question of the common good, and what nonprofit organizations owe to American society. This, after all, is the underpinning logic behind universities, schools, churches and the like. If the public feels

that a nonprofit institution is not fulfilling its obligation to the common good, they will leverage any foothold they can in order to pull greater contributions. The case of Penn and Philadelphia demonstrates that these modern town-gown debates are larger than any isolated conflict, but extend to the question of what universities owe their communities.

An additional lesson from this case study is that Penn must be extremely mindful in all its actions as a leading institution in Philadelphia. During the lawsuit, President Hackney remarked that Penn was, “a bit like an elephant...there are some great hunters out there who want to put a tusk on the wall.” Regardless of one’s opinion on Penn’s position in the controversy, it was certainly a big target in a popular hunt. Penn’s own students rallied against the institution in support of PILCOP’s lawsuit, frustrated at the prospect of the prestigious institution having turned its back on the larger community. The university’s actions are reflected upon its student body, just as its student body is reflected upon its name. When it comes to the delicate relationship between an elite Ivy League institution and its neighbors, Penn ought to consider the lessons learned from the Mayor’s Scholarship controversy and the speed with which Philadelphians rallied to PILCOP’s call.

As an institution our actions and inactions express morality, our indifference or engagement with our community teach lessons to our students and society.

- Netter Center for Community Partnership, October 1992

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