News Release

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Students, Administrators, and City Members Gather to Discuss Burlington Common Ground

Town and Gown Relations. A metonymy we often refer to as Town-Gown originally created to describe the relations between the city members—the town, and the members of the University community—historically distinguishable by their gowns. In a dominant college town such as Burlington, positive town and gown relations are essential to creating a vibrant, creative, and safe atmosphere for both the town and the gown constituents.

This past Saturday, January 30th, despite the morning cold, over sixty people gathered together over a common goal: the betterment of the Burlington community. Despite the morning chill and the early hour, conversations flowed smoothly as ideas were pitched from the nine small group sessions before being coalesced into a large strategic plan for the next year.

Sponsored by the University of Vermont Community Coalition, the summit efficiently covered a broad range of issues over the course of four hours. Ideas discussed included noise pollution, vandalism, city trash, on-campus housing, renter-tenant relationships, and affordability of Burlington housing. Solutions were mapped out on a timeline of the year and included
everything from neighborhood spaghetti nights and coasters in the bars downtown to building more “student” on-campus UVM housing and brainstorming more efficient city travel options.

Gail Shampnois, Director of University of Vermont Student and Community Relations, is working to tabulate the results from both the timeline and the post-survey of the event. According to Shampnois, the results of the summit were great: “It really established the idea that we can come together as a community.” Though this was the first summit the UVM Community Coalition has hosted, she hopes it will not be the last.

Claire Chevrier, a University of Vermont student and an Student Government Association Senator felt that the Common Ground Summit went “beautifully.” Recently, Chevrier created a Neighborhood Noise Task Force to be the “muscle” of any constructive ideas on how to tackle neighborhood noise. For Chevrier and her Task Force, “The Common Ground Summit was a perfect way to kick off because we now have many wonderful ideas that we can start working on turning into a reality.”