

# The Value of Deliberative Conversation in Participatory Action Research

*A Student Commentary on the  
Buffalo Project – Academic  
Year 2017-18*

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*May 2020*

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## Abstract

Since World War II, the US has steadily become more and more diverse. Census research indicates that “by 2044, more than half of all Americans are projected to belong to a minority group; and by 2060, nearly one in five of the nation’s total population is projected to be foreign born.”<sup>1</sup> The data indicates that the US is moving towards a majority-minority population, but the questions are: How can the US address the needs of such a diverse cultural and political body? What do colleges and universities need to do in order to help create programming that speaks to students across cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and political lines? With this premise in mind, the Principal Investigator (PI) Dr. Rhianna C. Rogers, co-PIs, colleagues, and research associates have worked with community stakeholders and Western New York (WNY) data to engage in an ethnographic study of perceptions of culture in the WNY region and propose solutions to the above questions. Called the “Buffalo Project,” this study is “an action-based diversity project focused on utilizing participant observations of culture as a way to inform the development of culture-based programming in college and community environments.”<sup>2</sup> This paper will discuss one affiliated subproject within the Buffalo Project: “Deliberative Conversations” (Academic Year (AY) 2017-present). To encourage cross-cultural communication, the Buffalo Project partnered with State University of New York (SUNY) Empire State College Division of Student Affairs to create spaces across the college to discuss timely and challenging topics that engage and encourage diverse voices in the learning process. Using a few Conversations as case studies, student research associates (RAs) discussed their perceptions of the impact of Deliberative Conversations on the learning process and community engagement.

**Keywords:** Participatory Action Research (PAR), cultural understanding, Deliberative Conversation, diversity, culture, reentry, citizen

## Introduction

As a longitudinal study of WNY perceptions of culture, the Buffalo Project (AY 2010-19) has provided academic and community participants with a framework to discuss their perceptions of culture and develop cross-cultural competencies in the process. The results of this work have informed significant programmatic changes at SUNY Empire State College (ESC) in WNY, and beyond, which have helped enhance the ESC experience as well as increase student engagement and retention efforts. To understand the need for this type of engaged learning, it is important to contextualize the culture of WNY. Historically, WNY has endured decades of cultural tensions and segregation.<sup>3</sup> Survey data collected from the Buffalo Project substantiated this information and highlighted additional inequities across many cross-cultural variables (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, settlement/location, class, language, ability/disabilities, technology). For example, though some ESC student respondents viewed their cultural perceptions as inclusive, highlighted by the majority of respondents either strongly agreeing (39.47%, n=30) or agreeing (56.58%, n=43) that they take time to understand cultural differences and similarities, later in the same survey many students indicated that they were unsure (2.60%, n=2 strongly agreeing and 23.38%, n=18 agreeing) how to approach others about their cultural backgrounds (Buffalo Project 2.0 Participant Survey Form, 2012-14.) This example highlighted an apparent disconnect between perceptions of inclusivity and students' actual ability to speak and communicate across cultural lines. As a result of these and similar responses, Principal Investigator Dr. Rhianna C. Rogers and colleagues identified the importance of developing tangible, intercultural competencies among diverse populations. As an offshoot, the Buffalo Project has created and co-created a variety of culturally inclusive programming in the region, including Deliberative Conversations, discussed below.

Using the Buffalo Project as a framework, this paper will examine the implementation of Deliberative Conversations as a form of citizen engagement at SUNY Empire State College. Using two specific Conversations as case studies, Buffalo Project RAs will discuss best practices for future Deliberative Conversations as well as how to implement a productive Deliberative Conversation in academic and nonacademic settings. The hope is to encourage the development of intercultural competencies and improve the overall process of community engagement in academic and community settings moving forward.



## Methodology

### Participatory Action Research as a Framework for Deliberative Conversations

At SUNY Empire State College, Deliberative Conversations grew out of a partnership between the college's Division of Student Affairs and the Buffalo Project (AY 2010-19). As a baseline for these conversations, organizers solicited topics from college and community stakeholders that would "increase cultural awareness, interaction, and discussion among students, faculty, and staff around difficult topics [as well as]...intentionally bring together individuals who represent diverse perspectives around a topic, sometimes difficult or controversial, to advocate for tangible, joint solutions that give a voice to all invested in the conversation."<sup>4</sup> Change management pioneer Kurt Lewin defined democratic-deliberative dialogues as an evolving practice of actively involving the researchers and subjects as active participants in the cross-examination of social conditions.<sup>5</sup> The goal of the dialogues was to uncover diverse viewpoints and shift the overall conversation from a focus on the dominant views about such social conditions and allow for more pluralism in perspectives (i.e., to include marginalized views). Based on the reflective nature of Lewin's framework, action research-based dialogues give voice to different perspectives as well as lead to social action and change; thus, they empower the participants to improve their environment or social conditions around them.<sup>6</sup>

To solidify Lewin's concept, the Buffalo Project combined Deliberative Conversations with the methodological approach of Participatory Action Research (PAR).<sup>7</sup> Utilizing PAR methodology in collaboration with the collection of autoethnographic data, Deliberative Conversations have been an effective way to bring diverse groups of individuals together to deliberate and discuss social issues and promote cultural awareness among multiple viewpoints and perspectives. As Ellis et al. quoted, autoethnographic data "describes and analyzes personal experiences in order to understand cultural experiences [in a broader and more inclusive frame of reference]."<sup>8</sup> With this methodological frame in mind, qualitative data was

collected from Conversations and utilized to develop additional programming/future Conversations around topics of cultural inclusivity and awareness.

**Deliberative Conversation.** According to McCoy & Scully, Deliberative Conversations consist of two joined components—“dialogue” and “deliberation”—to encourage participants to come together in hopes of achieving an increased understanding of an issue from differing perspectives.<sup>9</sup> The goal of Deliberative Conversations is to deconstruct stereotypes, share ideas, and identify solutions for policy and program development. Creating a culture of understanding and acceptance through Deliberative Conversation empowers participants to improve their social and environmental conditions.

The action-based research approach of Deliberative Conversations engages participants as a part of the solution, posing the challenge: “What should we do about it?” and creating an open forum for addressing the topic discussed. Deliberative Conversations are not intended to solve or resolve a problem but rather to explore the most promising avenues for action to create a more just environment. By directly engaging community members who are affected by the specified topic, this participatory process leads to active investment and empowerment, strengthening the potential outcomes. This process of civic engagement promotes a genuine opportunity for individuals to actively participate in policy change, empowering them, and creating a sense of ownership over the outcome.<sup>10</sup> McCoy and Scully further demonstrate that by using this method of engagement—including gathering those who have a shared understanding of unjust social conditions, those who face inequities in and absence from policy creation, along with those who have the power to influence change—action can truly take place. Creating such spaces, shifts in perspective are likely to develop, lessening possible barriers. The discussions were wide-reaching, engaging both the student body and the community at-large, and utilized both in-person and online forums to be as inclusive as possible. At the end of each Conversation, participants were asked to co-develop an action plan to improve the conditions of the topic discussed.

## Discussion

The selected case studies that follow combine the observations made by research associates and authors of this paper who attended the discussions. The case studies demonstrate how utilizing the specific approach of Deliberative Conversations can improve cultural competencies and increase inclusion among community populations.

### Case Study #1: Bridging and Bonding: How Can We Engage Communities in a Time of Change?

**Participant Observation.** In the fall of 2017, eight individuals (ranging between 30-60 years old, one male and seven females, of whom three identified as people of color) gathered on the SUNY ESC-WNY campus to review the related guiding document and associated discussion questions provided to participants prior to and during the Deliberative Conversation. Each respondent was associated with SUNY ESC, but



varied in role (i.e., as student, alumni, or faculty member). All participants were referred for participation by faculty or staff. Following a brief introduction, the moderator (PI Rogers) led the group in identifying expectations for participation. The process of clarifying the expectations of the group is the recommended practice for a facilitated discussion, as it articulates the objectives of the discussion and gives ownership to the participants' expected conduct.<sup>11</sup> By doing so, the moderator sets the tone of the discussion, assuring all participants that it is a safe place to express themselves.

In this Buffalo Project Deliberative Conversation, emphasis was placed on the link between identity and community values. Each participant contributed openly, defining and discussing perceptions of the meaning of "community." Universal themes that emerged from this discussion were community (specifically as a reflection of neighborhood and its connection to racial and socioeconomic identities<sup>12</sup>), gender, and cultural inclusion (and exclusion), with a significant focus on the social media biases and cultural limitations within the WNY area. Despite the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, participants conducted themselves in a way that promoted a "safe space" to converse. Participants shared ideas and concerns openly and, when appropriate, respectfully challenged or responded in a manner that allowed productive conversation to continue. To observers, the Deliberative Conversation method looked to be a useful tool for fostering the intended open environment for dialogue.

**Analysis.** As the Buffalo Project adapted Deliberative Conversation as a method of engaging the SUNY ESC student body, it seemed most fitting to commence with the topic of community and civic engagement. Given the connection participants made between social media and topics of community unrest, we felt it important to discuss its role in these types of Conversations. In his book, *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam refers extensively to the negative impacts unregulated technologies can have on family, race relations, political climate, community development, and other elements of respectful civic engagement.<sup>13</sup> The rise of uncivil behaviors across cultural groups in social media (e.g., trolling) and the lack of oversight has compounded these issues. Our reliance on computerized devices has changed how we are utilizing our own senses, intelligence, cultural perceptions, actions/behaviors, and even our bodies in ways that did not exist just a few decades ago. Without judging good or bad, it's fair to say that changes are significant enough that it is imperative that we study it and

understand where society is heading. Putnam further identifies two types of social capital as “bonding” and “bridging.” Bonding refers to associating with others who are like-minded. Bridging, on the other hand, is a form of social capital that joins people or groups who are different or who have different interests.<sup>14</sup> Both these aspects of social capital play a role in developing an engaged community, on- and off-line, which requires researchers to measure its role in the development of social-conscious and inclusive conversations, like the one analyzed here.

The guiding document used in this Conversation, *Bridging and Bonding, How Can We Create Engaged Communities in a Time of Rapid Change?*, reflects and simplifies the work of Putnam, making it accessible to a broader audience. Author Joni Doherty presents this concept of decreasing civic engagement in the context of acknowledging, first, why this has occurred, and second, what action can be taken to reverse this trend. This article discusses the decline of civic engagement and offers three potential solutions for participants to consider. Each solution, or “option,” poses a position to take and a “trade-off” or result of the said position. The three options presented are: “Embrace change and affirm differences”; “Strengthen and renew traditional ways of connecting”; and “Meet people where they are.”<sup>15</sup> The first option includes strategies such as increased technological availability and linguistic diversity of signage in public areas, increased accessibility for citizens, promoting modernization of civic entities, allowing for the use of social media and web-based communications, and advocating for internet safety and increased cultural awareness of social groups. The author advocates for individuals to “strengthen and renew traditional ways of connecting.”<sup>16</sup> Some of the methods suggested include socially engaging community events such as festivals, improved community and public safety measures, increased awareness of culturally-sensitive policies for organizations, increased education of cultural and identity history, and increased online communities that bring people together. Lastly, the option to “meet people where they are” should include strategies for identifying alternative methods for encouraging civic participation. Examples include developing internships to advance employment skills, seeking short-term connections with individuals or businesses within the community, offering training to students in areas of socioeconomic interest (e.g., pursuing tax incentives), and eliminating required community service or volunteer opportunities that do not lead to employment.<sup>17</sup>

This Conversation delved into the three options presented by Doherty, exploring the benefits of each approach as well as the potential consequences. The consensus was not the objective of this session; instead, it was the introduction of these concepts to this group of participants to increase awareness of their roles and influence in their communities.

A Wordle<sup>TM</sup><sup>18</sup> was created to highlight the frequently used terms from participants of the Bridging and Bonding Deliberative Conversation. Though the frequent use of the term community in this conversation is not surprising, its focus as a catalyst for discussing feelings of inclusion, comfort, difference, and relationship development was important to highlight.<sup>19</sup>





The larger the word in the figure, the more the word appeared in the Deliberative Conversations. Observing the high frequency of words like “community” and “inclusion” also provides a glimpse into what the participants took away. Community and inclusion are essential aspects of the development of cultural awareness and understanding. An increase in cultural recognition through the specific use of language supports a positive connection between Deliberative Conversations as a successful action-based research approach.

## Case Study #2: Journeys in Social Stigma: Supporting Formerly Incarcerated People’s Re-Entry into Education

**Participant Observation.** In the spring of 2018, SUNY ESC was host to a Deliberative Conversation entitled *Journeys in Social Stigma: Supporting Formerly Incarcerated People’s Re-Entry into Education*. In attendance, alongside the moderator (Dr. Rogers), were twenty (20) individuals who identified as current students (n=11), formerly incarcerated individuals (n=4), correction officers (n=1), SUNY ESC staff (n=3), and social service workers (n=1). The discussion was different from other Deliberative Conversation in both context and formality. The environment for this session was intended to foster ease and openness for the participants by offering a light meal and a relaxed atmosphere upon arrival. The seating was in a U-shape, which allowed all participants to see each other and communicate directly.

The makeup of this session was also different from the other Deliberate Conversations that took place, as it brought together a combination of participants who, in other contexts, may be reluctant to interact openly. The session began with a review of the guiding document, the Conversation objectives, group expectations, and a time limit for the session. The stated objectives of this discussion were to bring together individuals who have experienced the stigma of incarceration in different ways, and in turn, detect



common themes that emerged from these perspectives; to identify new discussion topics for future dialogue sessions; and to empower those who participated to engage in Conversation to influence change around those stigmatized by these experiences.

Each participant introduced themselves by first name and a brief description of their connection to the topic. Participants listened to each other's stories and, when necessary, answered questions. Throughout the discussion, the conversation flowed freely with the moderator accounting for the time allotted to each portion of the sample questions provided to the group via the guiding document. The conversation was free-form, allowing the participants to direct the course of the conversation and focus on matters that were most significant to them. The open moderation approach allowed for participants to speak freely, with redirection only exercised where conflict appeared unresolvable or to encourage active contribution from all participants.

While all conversations that took place were significant, the ones that stood out were those between the formerly incarcerated individuals. Listening to them engage with each other provided other participants the chance to hear how widely different their experiences were both in prison and outside. Common themes that emerged throughout this session were that of "fitting in," particularly regarding education, employment, community, and society in general.<sup>20</sup> "Fitting in" also referred to opportunities, both unavailable and available, to returning citizens. This session yielded an opportunity to discuss current policies, mainly education policies that directly affect the returning citizens.<sup>21</sup> A specific focus on reducing stigma towards formerly incarcerated peoples as well as the change in the reentry process itself, triggered a discussion on the methods in which the criminal justice system works to prepare individuals for the return to their communities.

The final aspect of the Deliberative Conversation called for the development of group solutions and action items. Based on the conversation, the group decided to develop a website that would provide formerly incarcerated individuals and community members with easily accessible resources, individual accounts, testimonies to relate to, and peer support opportunities. The website was also intended to educate families about available resources. The goal following the creation of the website was for individuals to gather virtually and share information.<sup>22</sup>

**Analysis.** As part of the Deliberative Conversation format, the organizers selected the following article to inform and frame the discussion: “Journeys in Social Stigma: The Lives of Formerly Incarcerated Felons in Higher Education.”<sup>23</sup> The piece utilized the method of autoethnographic interviews as a qualitative data collection method to represent formerly incarcerated individuals’ experiences reentering society and educational institutions. The article discusses the theories and effects of stigma as well as the perspectives of those who experience it. While the article’s sample of participants was relatively low, the findings yielded valuable results. Common themes among the participants of this study included the negative self-perception of the stigmatized group, which contributes to decreased self-esteem and increased stress, particularly around disclosing their backgrounds. As a result, the study recommends support or assistance groups to promote a smoother “transition” to the new environment; and, at the same time, researchers also indicated that open labeling of these individuals might not be optimal.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the guiding document, PI Rogers posed four questions that would familiarize the participants with the topic and guide the direction of the conversation. The questions provided were:

1. How does social stigma impact the opportunity of formerly incarcerated people in education and the job market?
2. What societal pressures impact formerly incarcerated people?
3. Under what circumstances would people choose to disclose/not disclose their incarceration?
4. How can we destigmatize agencies, organizations, and people who have used the system in order to better themselves?

Arguably, the Deliberative Conversation was effective in bringing a wide variety of individuals together to discuss cultural disparities and share knowledge. Afterwards, Dr. Rogers created the website as a stepping-stone for individuals to contribute to the research and data, post individualized stories, and collect resources for different stakeholders. Though initial engagement on the website was minimal; in the spring of 2020, the influx of new interns from the Rockefeller Institute of Government’s Center for Law and Policy Solutions and the Buffalo Project 3.0 has increased materials on the site. To prevent future stagnation of action items post-Conversations, a solution could be to select a person or subgroup from the Conversation group and have them responsible for meeting regularly and setting goals for accountability and action item completion. The lack of initial follow-through upon the conclusion of a Deliberative

Conversation in 2018 draws concern about how to successfully measure the outcomes of affiliated action plans. We believe improving the processes now will contribute to the overall success of future Deliberative Conversations, ensuring the development of more sustainable and replicable practices.

## Implementation

The analysis of the aforementioned Deliberative Conversations held at SUNY Empire State College are useful examples for how to host events around sensitive issues. The following are key points to address when developing a Deliberative Conversation event of your own:

1. **Gather potential participant input before selecting a topic.** Outreach to community stakeholders will provide valuable data to determine the topic. Also, soliciting the views of potential and prior Conversation participants allows them to know that their voice matters, thus making them more likely to get involved in future events.
2. **Select a space that is accessible to all.** Do not limit those who can attend by hosting the event in a space that is vulnerable to distractions or provides only limited access for those with disabilities. Physical space can also be supplemented with virtual spaces (e.g., video conferencing tools) to encourage broader engagement.
3. **Examine and diversify resource perspectives.** Strictly academic sources may prove inaccessible to a wider audience. To reach a broader range of potential participants, select resources that present material from a variety of perspectives and offer a clear, straightforward explanation of the issue. The goal is to be inclusive and not to favor one perspective on the topic over another.
4. **Encourage participation through support and safe spaces.** Developing a positive atmosphere free of judgment will be vital in a fruitful Deliberative Conversation. If participants feel judged or underqualified to participate, then they will be less likely to participate. Every person attending has a voice and should be heard.
5. **Solicit participant feedback.** A quick paper survey handed out at the end of the discussion will offer the participants a chance to voice their thoughts while the discussion is fresh in their minds. Also, the survey will provide data that indicates if the discussion was a success or not. If participants feel nothing occurred, then future discussions can be adjusted to convey the importance of the event.
6. **Follow up to ensure longitudinal sustainability and participant buy-in.** It is important that participants are empowered to continue the conversations after the event ends. If true change is to occur, it cannot be done in one meeting.

For the future implementation of Deliberative Conversations, it will be essential to consider the dynamics of the group and the significance of the moderator's role during sessions. Structuring of a session is particularly valuable, not only for moderation purposes and to keep participants focused, but to convey the expectations of the session. Establishing a set of basic discussion practices may better prepare respondents for the process. Beyond the facilitation of conversation, the creation of a "safe space" for participants is the responsibility of the moderator. When deliberately placing individuals with opposing perspectives together for conversation, it is imperative that all participants feel validated and welcome to participate. Validation is especially crucial when engaging participants who, in other contexts, may hold varying levels of power and privilege.

In addition to empowering participants and creating action plans that evolve from each session, identification of a responsible party for creating action is crucial, as is a subsequent follow-up. Future implementation of this kind of action research should consider polling the affected community to identify additional areas of need, then drawing from said responses to recruit participants for additional discussion. Additional value may be found in polling the participants about their experience in the discussion as a way to adapt and continue to improve the process. Measuring the outcomes and impacts for an extended period after the discussions could yield more accurate and measurable data on the efficacy of this method.

By developing safe spaces for dialogue, individuals or groups that are typically stigmatized and marginalized are given a seat at the table to generate action-based change.

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## Conclusion

Though this paper addressed only two of the ten Deliberative Conversations held so far (2017-19), we conclude that this format served as a successful pilot and model for future collegewide and community-based discussions. As has been seen in other affiliated Buffalo Project events (2010-present), community connections can be forged where they had not previously existed if framed within culturally-competent frameworks. As was seen in this paper, increased awareness of community conditions, as well as an increased understanding of unfamiliar circumstances, can lead to more opportunities for further action, collaborations, networking, and inclusivity. Based on the success of the pilot Conversations, beginning in 2019-20, Deliberative Conversations are now regularly offered as SUNY Empire as a joint-program supported by Student Life/ Buffalo Project. In spring 2020, four additional Conversations will be held, including one jointly constructed by Buffalo Project/Center for Law and Policy Solutions interns.

By developing safe spaces for dialogue, individuals or groups that are typically stigmatized and marginalized are given a seat at the table to generate action-based change. With the changing demographics of higher education, reconsidering how individuals interact and think about culture is crucial. As has been discussed in other parts of the Buffalo Project, there is a historical memory<sup>25</sup> in WNY that includes the

systematic domination of one cultural group (European Americans) over another (minority/marginalized populations and viewpoints). While colleges have been implementing programs to address cultural competencies (or lack thereof) in the region, few institutions have looked to the students themselves to help build these programmatic changes. Thomas F. Nelson Laird of the University of Michigan stated, "Students with more experiences with diversity, particularly enrollment in diversity courses and positive interactions with diverse peers, are more likely to score higher on academic self-confidence, social agency, and critical thinking disposition."<sup>26</sup> Our conclusion is that in order to break the cycle of cultural misunderstandings, change must occur. Our suggestion is that educating students and giving them space to co-develop programming can help make that change happen. Through campus programs, like the Buffalo Project and its affiliated Deliberative Conversations, we can foster an increased "safe space" for students to interact, learn from each other, and develop cultural sensitivity that is truly needed in the 21st century globalized world.



# ENDNOTES

## Endnotes

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- 12 A perfect example of this institutionalized segregation and power struggle comes from the 2015 report *Better Choices for Buffalo's Students: Expanding & Reforming the Criteria Schools System*. The report states the following:

Buffalo has struggled with high levels of segregation for at least three quarters of a century. In 1940, when the economy was based largely on the transnational shipment of iron and steel, the city's still-small black population was extremely segregated. Almost 90% of black residents in 1940 would have needed to move to a different neighborhood in order to achieve full integration, according to one common measure. Over the next two decades, as substantial numbers of African Americans moved into Buffalo during and after World War II, [still] segregation remained extremely high. The 1960 census showed that on a scale where "0" meant no segregation and "100" meant that each neighborhood



was totally one-race, virtual apartheid, Buffalo rated a staggering 87.3. In 1976, when the federal court examined the evidence on housing segregation, the city was found guilty of intentional public actions fostering residential separation. In 1993, when Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton published their classic book, *American Apartheid*, Buffalo was still listed as one of the nation's most hyper-segregated residential metropolitan areas. The 2010 Census showed that metro Buffalo remained one of the most segregated housing markets for African Americans in the United States. In Buffalo, the time period between 1940 and 2000 was also defined by dramatic overall population decline and increasing levels of poverty. By 2010, at the end of a massive economic shift from heavy metals to service, technology, and information, Buffalo was still one of the nation's most segregated cities for black residents. At that time, although the Hispanic population of the region was still small (but growing), the metro segregation index for Hispanics was a significant [at] 51.8. The federal court in Buffalo found the city government guilty of intentionally fostering residential segregation in 1976, which is why the city and the school district were under court orders to support school diversity until 1995.

Gary Orfield et al., *Better Choices for Buffalo's Students: Expanding & Reforming the Criteria Schools System* (Los Angeles: UCLA: The Civil Rights Project /Proyecto Derechos Civiles, 2015), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2pn9k70f>.

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- 15 Joni Doherty, *Bridging and Bonding: How Can We Create Engaged Communities in a Time of Rapid Change?* (Dayton: National Issues Forums Institute, 2013), <https://www.nifi.org/sites/default/files/regional-issue-guide-downloads/Download%20the%20issue%20guide%20Bridging%20and%20Bonding.pdf>.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Of note, participants of this conversation referred to the value of applied learning experiences at ESC (e.g., internships, research opportunities, and volunteer work) only when they were vehicles for future employment. During the conversation, participants frequently mentioned that they would like to meet colleagues across the college, but, as busy adults, would not participate in community building initiatives unless they could see a direct connection to future job opportunities.
- 18 Wordle™ is an image generator that populates an image with words that appear more frequently in source text and can be found at [wordle.com](http://wordle.com).
- 19 Goldman, *High Hopes*.
- 20 The following are sources for statistics on reentry and overall incarceration data: To access, please go to: <https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/>.
- 21 The following sources provide information on the education policies currently affecting formerly incarcerated individuals: William G. Martin, "Did SUNY Ban the Box? Or Just Move It?," *The Nation*, October 15, 2016, <https://www.thenation.com/article/did-suny-ban-the-box-or-just-move-it/>; and Jesse McKinley, "Cuomo to Give Colleges \$7 Million for Courses in Prisons," *New York Times*, August 6, 2017.
- 22 As of spring 2020, the Rockefeller Institute of Government's Center for Law and Policy Solutions interns and the Buffalo Project interns are working on expanding and updating the content on this website. The current draft website can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/site/formerlyincarceratedpeoples/home>.
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- 25 When discussing historical memory, it is critical to examine these memories “via accurate historical science” to account for any bias, privilege, distortion, or other factors that may be influencing the memory.
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