



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

LANCASTER

Town-Gown Reading Project
University of South Carolina Lancaster
Spring 2017

Since at least 2007 there has been a push by campus and community members to make Lancaster, South Carolina, a college town. In the 2007 development of the Campus Master Plan, records show that on several occasions stakeholders make statements expressing desires that “Lancaster [be] recognized as a college town” and that “USCL has to become community anchor—move from manufacturing to Education.” Indeed, the departure of Springs Industries left Lancaster floundering for a new identity. For so many years, the distinctiveness of Lancaster and surrounding towns was tied proudly to textiles and related manufacturing of cloth goods. The departure shook the region so deeply that in October 2008, *Forbes* magazine named Lancaster the most vulnerable town in the United States.

Economic and cultural redefinition of a community requires careful planning and a coming together of business, education, and arts interests; we have models in a number of communities such as Spartanburg and Greenville in South Carolina and Cabarrus County in North Carolina, as well as locally in the partnership that developed the Native American Studies Center, which has drawn visitors from 22 countries, 42 of the 50 states and 42 of 46 South Carolina counties. USC Lancaster has been most fortunate to have significant and generous community support throughout its history, and as Lancaster moves into this new period of its history, the university is well positioned to support the community as an active participant in its growth and development.

This proposed reading group will bring together participants from the local community and from the university faculty, staff and student body to explore ways to improve our community from many perspectives, including health, education, economics, culture and arts. Participants will receive a copy of *The Optimal Town-Gown Marriage* by Dr. Stephen M. Gavazzi, Dean and Director of The Ohio State University at Mansfield regional campus, an institution similar in a number of respects to USCL. Over several reading discussion meetings, participants will discuss Dr. Gavazzi’s book to find insight into the ways leaders at USC Lancaster and in the community can begin to conceptualize this multifaceted and multiyear enterprise. Currently plans are to bring the reading group together for four discussion sessions in early 2017, perhaps concluding with an open forum for campus and community. This reading group will generate ideas, questions, and information as a beginning point for a project that is by nature long-term and complex—and vital to the interests of all our campus and community members.