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PSU 3.0: SCANDAL AND INSIGHT THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF DIALOGUE

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ABSTRACT

In the fall of 2012 I facilitated fifteen dialogues with Penn State students about the Jerry Sandusky scandal. These were entitled “PSU 3.0” under the premise that while action has been taken to address the situation, not much of it has been influenced by Penn State students; how they think the university should respond and how they themselves have responded. In this paper, I outline some of the content from these dialogues through the framework of the ways in which students expressed self-understanding, understanding of others (or outsiders), and understanding of the events and aftermath of the scandal. I draw connections between the process of dialogue and the ways in which it contributed to this process of group understanding. I then conclude by raising questions based on themes from the conversations and examining the value of dialogue especially as it relates to the experiences and opinions that were shared by students in this process.

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Introduction

I came here for Penn State. I'm not all for Penn State. I have my own organizations; I'm more concerned with those organizations than Penn State. I don't mind this topic; I just think it gets brought up again and again. It happened a year ago. They're trying to fix it. We can't do anything about it. What's the point in talking about it if we can't do anything about it? (Dialogue 14, 59:15)

In the fall of 2012, I co-facilitated fifteen dialogues in which Penn State students were given an open forum to discuss everything that had happened in relation to the Jerry Sandusky child abuse scandal. These dialogues were entitled "Penn State 3.0" (PSU 3.0) under the premise that while action has been taken to address the situation, not much of it has been influenced by Penn State students; how they think the university should respond and how they themselves have responded. I facilitated conversations in which students could speak about a serious issue that impacted them to varying degrees.

My task here is to examine the new understandings participants had about themselves, others, and the events and aftermath of the Jerry Sandusky scandal. I will then generate questions and new insights that arise from the connections that develop between the texts of the conversations. A lot of the approach of this paper will be similar to the process of grounded theory in the sense that the questions raised will be driven predominately from the conversations themselves rather than a predetermined hypothesis.

In order to do this, the following sections will provide the reader with an understanding of what is meant by "dialogue" and explain the method employed throughout the course of the project. The dialogues themselves are then examined, but rather than trying to explain all fifteen

of them, I have picked out specific comments from five of the dialogues that seemed fairly representative of the conversations as a whole. In these sections, I go back and forth between describing the content of what students said in the dialogues and analyzing the process of dialogue itself. After working through this process of description and analysis, I draw reoccurring themes together in order to raise even further questions and to reflect upon the value of dialogue. In short, this paper is a responds to over twenty hours of dialogue with students about this topic by raising relevant questions based on what they shared. The goal of this project was to work with Penn State students in a way that not many people have in the wake of the scandal and to provide fodder for others to ponder for the future. The conclusions offered have to do with the experience of facilitation and observations about the process of dialogue.

It seems valuable to make a final note about the subject matter. I understand that the content of these dialogues has caused much debate and disagreement between people. If anything, that is why it is worth talking about. I do not presume to understand the complete account of what was done by Jerry Sandusky and in what ways others may have been complicit in those actions. As I was facilitating the dialogues, I did my best to refrain from reading much news in order to remain as curious and unbiased as possible in the process. I am not necessarily presenting my own views about what has happened. Perhaps the insights I have gained from the dialogues will inspire curiosity and understanding for others.

In these dialogues, students consented to be recorded, but in order to honor that agreement they must all remain anonymous in this paper. The appendix provides notes from the dialogues and the loose transcriptions utilized when quoting students in the paper. These will be cited in terms of the dialogue and timestamp of the comment.

What is Dialogue?

I'm sitting in a coffee shop while an older gentleman regales some innocent bystanders on the wonders of what he is learning from a book about Winston Churchill. His two listeners came to meet one another. To talk. Perhaps to have a conversation. And so it strikes me in the midst of this that dialogue must be a shared process. Rather than a one-sided moment of storytelling, dialogue is a dynamic process in which people come together to exchange a variety of different kinds of information that are products of a human experience. Those engaged in a dialogue share in this process. Far from a turn-based show-and-tell of one's own life experiences and musings, it is an active process in which others interject and disrupt narratives in order for new meaning and understanding to arise.

We have too many words that pretend to hint at this kind of experience and yet fail. We talk. We have conversations. We discuss and debate. But what is dialogue? In the book, *On Dialogue*, David Bohm writes:

“Dialogue” comes from the Greek word *dialogos*. *Logos* means “the word,” or in our case we would think of the “meaning of the word.” And *dia* means “through” – it doesn't mean two...The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a *stream of meaning* flowing among and through us and between us. (Bohm, 6)

Two or more individuals may come together and speak words to each other and yet never enter into this stream of meaning. In dialogue, we go beyond registering and deciphering the words that are spoken and into the greater significance of the roots from which these utterances grow.

In a basic conversation, we might attend to what is being said in order to respond or out of a sense of obligation. In a discussion or debate we might attend to the points being made in order to refute or evaluate which one is the most convincing. In dialogue we are attending to a process of shared meaning and significance. We seek to understand the foundation of what we are

talking about and we find that this consists of our most basic assumptions and the experiences that have shaped them.

The stream of meaning evoked by Bohm suggests an organic, emergent process. In dialogue, we do not have a specific point we strive to arrive to. We follow the process wherever it leads. What's more, we are not trying to prove a particular argument:

Clearly, a lot that is called "dialogue" is not dialogue...They are more like discussions...The people who take part are not really open to questioning their fundamental assumptions...Consequently their discussions are not serious, not deeply serious. A great deal of what we call "discussion" is not deeply serious, in the sense that there are all sorts of things which are held to be non-negotiable and not touchable, and people don't even want to talk about them. That is part of our trouble. (Bohm, 7)

In dialogue, we must seriously consider what we are hearing and undertake the process of examining our core assumptions and beliefs. This provides a unique opportunity to understand our selves in profound ways and even to refine and reform what we have always known. There is no "winner" at the conclusion of a dialogue. Everyone has had the opportunity to question their most basic assumptions and to partake in the process of others doing the same. What comes from this process is a new shared meaning and a glimpse into the collective consciousness that often has more influence on our understanding than our own individual perceptions. Dialogue fulfills our need for understanding ourselves, others, and the events that have shaped us.

Method: The Process of Facilitating Dialogue

All of the dialogues referred to over the course of this paper draw facilitation methodology from World in Conversation, an organization based in Penn State, University Park that trains undergraduate students to facilitate dialogues between their peers about taboo subjects and contentious issues:

World In Conversation grew directly... in response to the need to bridge deep divides that existed between racial and ethnic groups at Penn State following death threats and the ensuing student takeover of the HUB in 2002. The original facilitators were selected to participate in this fledgling endeavor from a pool of [undergraduate students]... With limited experience but immense trust in a simple vision of the power of conversation, this group followed the leadership of Drs. [Sam] Richards and [Laurie] Mulvey, successfully facilitating 135 discussions that first year... World In Conversation was called “Race Relations Project” until August 2010. (worldinconversation.org)

The name change from “Race Relations Project” to “World in Conversation” (WinC) came about as the conversations began to move beyond race and into other topics such as gender or college drinking culture and the participants were not only coming from University Park, but from other parts of the world such as Iran or China via video conferencing technologies. At its heart, World in Conversation seeks to help people better understand their own perspectives with regard to contentious issues and invites complete strangers to bridge the gap that lies between themselves and the “other.” That gap could be a result of race or gender; politics or location.

These conversations are typically made up of five to ten Penn State undergraduate students and are also co-facilitated by students. The two facilitators work together and use a number of skills and techniques to help participants examine their own experiences and opinions.

Facilitators also draw connections between what has been said in the conversation in order to make it easier for participants to directly interact with each other. An ideal facilitator almost becomes invisible over the course of a conversation as participants become more invested in what they are saying and discover the connections that tie them all together. In our everyday experience, conversation tends to primarily be a platform for our own voice to be heard and we often hear others incompletely if at all. In *Frame Analysis*, Erving Goffman suggests:

...what the individual spends most of his spoken moments doing is providing evidence for the fairness or unfairness of his current situation and other grounds for sympathy, approval, exoneration, understanding, or amusement. And what his listeners are primarily obliged to do is show some kind of audience appreciation.
(Goffman, 503)

A facilitated dialogue differs from casual conversation and discussions in that it moves beyond mere “audience appreciation” into a deeper understanding of the content and the people who are sharing their thoughts, beliefs, and stories.

WinC facilitators aim to have dialogues that are “ideologically neutral.” To be clear, by using this term, we only mean that we leave open the potential for any view to enter the conversation, even those that would normally be considered deviant or politically incorrect. In addition to this, to the best of their ability, facilitators suspend their own opinions and views on the topic and focus on listening to the content of the conversation. From this “neutral” position, facilitators ask questions that examine the experiences and basic assumptions that inform participants’ views. The paradox in all this is that although we aim for a certain kind of neutrality during the dialogues, we also acknowledge the fact that our facilitators are not neutral people. Even more than that, we ensure that each dialogue has facilitators that come from different ends of the spectrum materially and/or ideologically. We recognize that facilitators might not explicitly state their own opinions, but that their experiences and thought process will dictate their curiosity

and therefore, to some extent, the direction of the dialogue itself. Having the two facilitators come from two different backgrounds provides a check on any one facilitator glorifying or suppressing particular perspectives that the participants articulate.

Another significant difference between these facilitated dialogues and, say, a mere discussion or debate is that there is no “point” or specific agenda to the conversation. Facilitators are not trying to convince participants of any particular point or to coerce them into one specific perspective. If there is an agenda, it is merely to bring as many perspectives into the room around the topic, and to ask questions that allow people to understand each other. Even more than just listening to each other:

The point is that dialogue has to go into all the pressures that are behind our assumptions. It goes into the process of thought behind the assumptions, not just the assumptions themselves. (Bohm, 9)

So, far from being a directionless babble of random thoughts, facilitators ensure that the conversation moves to a point at which participants are thinking critically about their most basic assumptions and can examine the ways in which they use those assumptions to form their beliefs, develop opinions, and interpret their experiences. This process of facilitating is a delicate balance in which facilitators work together to go deeper into what is behind the content of the conversation without introducing new content or censoring less tolerable perspectives. For instance:

I have a really sick sense of humor. It’s going to blow up. People are going to give their opinion without knowing anything about it. Eventually it will all blow over. It’s just like Casey Anthony and Amanda Todd. Casey Anthony chloroformed her baby cause it wouldn’t stop crying and killed it...except she got off though so technically...and Amanda Todd meant to send this guy a picture of her naked, in the next couple of days he sent it out to the [whole]

school, she tried to kill herself by drinking bleach, family found her, she got her stomach pumped and was fine. After the students found out she tried to kill herself, they made fun of her even more and so she hung herself. (Dialogue 14, 23:48)

This participant had just shared that he previously dressed up as Amanda Todd and Casey Anthony on two separate occasions for Halloween. In his own words, he has a “really sick sense of humor.” In everyday conversation, ideas and stories like this one tend to get glossed over or censored. In dialogue, we go beyond what is acceptable to talk about and explore taboos that would not normally be examined in our culture. We’re not supposed to joke about babies being killed and teens committing suicide, and yet this is exactly what this participant seems to be suggesting that he did. Rather than censoring or shaming the participant, my co-facilitator and I worked to understand what was behind this participant’s point of view and his potentially offensive course of action. As the conversation progressed, this participant made insightful comments about how our culture responds to scandal and ultimately communicated that his stance on such matters is an attempt to avoid falling into the cycle of apathy that is so common in the wake of tragic events. In other words, for this person, his “sick” behavior is only a response to a much more repulsive sickness that infects our culture as a whole. This way of looking at the world, especially as it relates to the Sandusky scandal, is one that may not have otherwise been voiced in a group setting.

It is important to distinguish the process of welcoming any perspective from glorifying marginalized ones. While we work to understand each participant’s point of view, we are not simply passing over the “normal” or socially acceptable ones in favor for those that are more edgy and on the fringe. As facilitators, we challenge all views by supporting all views.

We use a version of the Socratic Method to accomplish this. While it seems contradictory to challenge a point of view by supporting it, we work under the assumption that if we take

everyone's experiences and the opinions and beliefs that arise from the stories people tell themselves in relation to their experiences, the "strongest" or most sound ideas will almost naturally "win out" over the weaker and less feasible ones. At times a facilitator may put a participant's view into question in a direct way. Another effective means to challenge what participants say is to ask questions about the process by which they came to understand their particular opinions or beliefs. In such situations, we are no longer asking questions that merely seek the facts of a matter and we move closer to asking questions from their perspective and ultimately about their perspective. For example, rather than asking someone "Can you prove that all minorities only get into college through affirmative action?" we might ask, "What experiences have you had with minorities and affirmative action that led you to that opinion?" or "What's it like having to go to school with people who have been handed a free ride?"

In dialogue everyone from any perspective can speak openly without being told by facilitators that they are wrong. Other participants might agree or disagree and share experiences in relation to the matter. The job of the facilitators is to get these participants to explore their own views and the views of others. From there, participants can make connections between themselves and the ideas they are sharing. The goal of these conversations is not to change anyone's opinion or fix anyone's problems, social or otherwise:

It would be too much to expect to start with that. And in fact, a personal problem may not be all that important anyway; although if someone has one, the group could consider it...*The group is not mainly for the sake of personal problems; it's mainly a cultural question...* It's important to understand that a dialogue group is not a therapy group of some kind. We are not trying to cure anybody here, though it may happen as a byproduct. But that's not our purpose. (Bohm, 14-16)

So in general, most individuals walk out of these experiences without changing their opinions. Oftentimes what is gained is a deeper understanding of one's own perspective as well as an increased ability to imagine another's perspective as it relates to an issue or topic. This might become a springboard for change in the individual; facilitators aren't intending for such an outcome to occur, though they wouldn't stifle it. Beyond this, participants often have their own new insights or get something out of the experience of dialogue itself.

There was a wide spectrum of thoughts and reactions following the end of these conversations. For some, the experience of sitting down to have a conversation with people they do not know is itself a novel practice. I am amazed at the realization that tens of thousands of talented and brilliant people from all walks of life at this institution seldom have the opportunity to truly engage with one another in an intimate and direct way. This provides an opportunity for people to converse and collaborate that may not have otherwise had the opportunity to do so. Beyond the experience of sharing with others, participants also gain insight into their own thought process in relation to topics we rarely speak freely about in the presence of acquaintances and strangers. An individual is able to refine his or her ideas and opinions through testing them in the arena of dialogue.

In order to ensure that participants can truly come into an experience of greater self-understanding that is likely to lead to a greater understanding of others, WinC facilitators avoid occupying a "teacher" position within the dialogue. This can create potential problems for the process of the dialogue. Oftentimes, participants arrive to the dialogue prepared to be taught. For most, the process of learning is a one-way street through which information travels from a teacher to the student. What we find is that students have often been primed to learn information and regurgitate it in order to receive high marks. At times, they are frustrated by the manifold processes of dialogue. Facilitators may ask questions, but they do not provide answers. The answers come from the participants and the facilitators are not there to proclaim one's answer as

correct. Even further, the best dialogues often involve participants asking each other questions and the facilitators becoming less prominent in order to subtly direct the participants when difficulties and misunderstandings arise. In this way, no one person is accountable for learning and the overall process of dialogue, but at the same time everyone becomes accountable.

Another problem that comes out of this is that, for some, the dialogue may indeed be a waste of time. If a participant is not willing to share or to even listen to what is being said in the conversation, then that experience will most likely not be useful for that individual. Facilitators do their best to work with this dynamic by building rapport throughout the conversation and taking a genuine interest in the participants early on. Through authenticity, genuine curiosity, and a little bit of audacity facilitators invite the participants to invest themselves in the conversation and take full advantage of the unique opportunity that comes along with it. If we are able to get to a place of exploration and curiosity in ourselves and others, then the process of dialogue can open up new possibilities for understanding.

PSU 3.0

I think it's unfair because I heard that actually the scandal is just about a kind of football coach, not—it's not the main coach, but another one, an assistant, but I don't understand why the act of an assistant would affect so big because in my mind USA is kind of a individualism country, so he is responsible for his own bad but why the whole school has to bear his... wrongdoing so I just don't understand why. (Dialogue 1, 16:56)

The PSU 3.0 dialogues were unique for WinC for a number of reasons. Usually WinC dialogues are populated by students from a variety of disciplines and classes that require them to attend. The PSU 3.0 dialogues all came from the same Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management (HRIM) class and every student that participated was an HRIM major. This is unique in that the goals and concerns of these students as students most likely differ from that of their peers from other majors.

Usually WinC dialogues are grounded in a specific social issue, but PSU 3.0 dialogues were grounded in events. These events themselves were often vague and difficult to identify. What falls within the scope of the topic and what is extraneous? To be clear, the intent behind these dialogues was to provide an opportunity for Penn State students to talk to one another about everything that has happened in relation to Jerry Sandusky and the university, including the aftermath. As a facilitator, this was a difficult conversation to introduce. This is because of the process of mirroring that often occurs in dialogue. I found that the way I introduced the topic influenced the way students participated in the conversation. For some of the initial dialogues, I framed the conversation in a manner similar to this:

In the past year and a half or so, a lot has happened with our university and what some have called the Jerry Sandusky “scandal.” There have been shifts at our institution. We have a new president and new administration. The university has enacted new policies and taken action to show that it does not take what happened here lightly. We are used to hearing from the higher-ups of Penn State and outsiders about their expectations for the university as a whole, but we have not heard much from the students who might be affected the most as new policies and initiatives are put in place. There has been a sort of “never again” and “there will be a new Penn State” kind of rhetoric. And so we are here to explore what a new Penn State might look like from a student’s eyes. We want to hear how you have been affected by everything that has happened and how you think the news that has come to the surface recently should be responded to. In some ways other universities, other parts of the U.S. and even the world are looking to see what Penn State will do. How do you respond?

Compare this to the way I began to introduce later dialogues:

What sticks out to you in the wake of all this news surrounding Jerry Sandusky and the university?

Aside from being less verbose than the first introduction, the second leaves the canvas of the conversation with more white space, but is still clear enough so that the participants know what they might want to paint. In dialogues that began with the first introduction, participants often spoke from a very grandiose and elevated position. I got the impression that we were dealing with a global crisis of massive proportions. This undertone did not necessarily dominate the conversation, but it certainly set up a dynamic that had to be worked through in order to get closer to the simpler, more intimate reactions that students had. This is also not to say that we were not dealing with a global crisis of massive proportions. And here is the difficulty of framing

the conversation. As a facilitator, my aim is to make sure that every participant has enough understanding of the topic in order to speak about it while also doing my best not to limit a possible perspective that someone enters with. If I make the topic out to be very important I may censor those who see it as irrelevant. If I don't make it out to be a matter of concern at all, then those that were deeply troubled by it may have more difficulty in sharing. I have come to embrace the word "scandal," but in a broad sense. The word itself conveys some kind of action or event that is seen as a deep moral offense on a social level, but scandal can also be teased out to pertain to the way in which we often respond to such events. Scandal is both an event and the affective response to that event. This would seem to best serve the process of facilitators initiating these dialogues. It can accommodate one's disgust and aversion in relation to deviant behaviors while also allowing others to reflect upon the potential for cruelty and excess in the response to that behavior itself.

In this section, I will present pieces of content from the participants through three different lenses: self-understanding, understanding of others, and understanding what happened and the aftermath. In each section I will highlight the ways in which the process of dialogue enabled the conversations to get to points that might have otherwise been lost in an un-facilitated interaction.

Self-Understanding

I feel like as students, even just following it in general, I don't know if it's just our everyday life that we are so involved with the school that we just have a lot to do throughout the day, I don't know why, but I feel like I'm so uninformed...The people who aren't in school are the ones who are saying something or asking something about the situation going on, and I don't know if it's just 'cause we're focused on school or other things, but I feel like we're just trying to be students, and everyone else just wants to make a big deal...don't get me wrong—that sounded really bad, it is a big deal. I feel like they want to make it something more than what we want to do. We want to keep going and trying to continue to be students and they want to harp on it. (Dialogue 9, 58:15)

Description

Crises provide a unique opportunity for people to understand themselves and their surroundings. The process of dialogue can help us gain access to a new understanding of ourselves and the institutions we are a part of in the wake of such events. When I use the term “self-understanding” here, I include the participants’ understanding of the institution they comprise (i.e. Penn State itself). This understanding can be explicit, but there can also be subtle implicit opinions and assumptions that become easier to see as the process unravels:

I really disagreed with the statue coming down, if we want to remember what happened and learn from it, then I think that taking it down is a symbol of ignorance...if you're going to remember something that's not how you do it.
(Dialogue 1, 40:50)

This is a statement from an individual student and within it the sentiments of much of what was said overall by those who participated as a whole are also reflected. To this student, taking down Paterno's statue was the wrong move and ultimately an attempt to give in to the demands of media and the public's outrage. The vacant space where the statue once stood now represents ignorance and failure to truly face the situation. It also hinders the process of remembering what happened and encourages forgetfulness. Many students expressed frustration while talking about the ways in which the university has had to negotiate with outsiders, the influence of media on the image of Penn State, and the sense that they had anything to do with the perpetration of abuse by Sandusky. These students live in two worlds: Penn State and what is outside of Penn State. On the inside, much seems to have remained unchanged. At the time of the dialogues, many students were in the middle of their first semester at University Park. Many said that had they heard nothing about the scandal, they would assume that all was well at the university:

I think because the professors and faculty keep us at ease, as long as recruiters still want us and no one here is freaking out, everything is okay. (Dialogue 1, 1:11:30)

For students, then, everything seems fine from the inside. Class is still in session. Homework is still due. Recruiters are still coming and want to hire students from Penn State specifically. Thinking about the quote from earlier then, one could see why most students would not necessarily take the time to learn more about the scandal. For them, the scandal falls outside of the realm of being a student:

You can have an accident happen at any time. What can Penn State do? We can only do so much. There is no way to identify [pedophiles]. Penn State isn't safe, just like everywhere else. (Dialogue 2, 37:50)

What happened was incidental from a student's perspective. In many of the dialogues, students expressed frustration and confusion with the ways in which others associate the actions of Sandusky with the university as a whole. A sentiment within this that students feel like they have to face kept coming to the surface; to name it we might say: Jerry Sandusky got away with sexually abusing and assaulting little boys at Penn State for a number of years; you're a student, what are you going to do about it? It is difficult to pinpoint precisely where this idea comes from, but after spending time hearing students speak, it is clear that much of what they had to say responds directly or indirectly to it.

Another aspect of being a student at Penn State that came up in the dialogues has to do with the paradox of feeling connected and invested at an institution with over 45,000 other members:

So freshman year I hung out with people on my floor...but then I realized that I don't like these people. So for me, you get into an organization and those are your friends...you need to find some place that's like family here because you're away from your family and people here just sort of naturally divide up...You have to pick what you spend your time doing cause you could come up here and spend your time being lost. (Dialogue 11, 1:15:30)

Many students spoke of Penn State as a proxy kind of family, if not in explicit terms, then through the ways in which they described feeling connected to a community and identifying with it in a profound way. This connection was based on a number of different factors and varied between students. Some that stand out are the football program, THON, wearing PSU gear, and the specific major a student is a part of. It is easy to miss the ways in which students feel disconnected or see separation within the university because of this larger sense of community:

One thing that bothers me about PSU is that it's so diverse, but we don't mix.

You've all seen the flocks of black people or Asian people. And I don't think

PSU encourages us to mix...We're all guilty of it...everyone here cannot all be one thing. We all go to Penn State, that's all we really have in common. People don't really look much further than that...It is a whole, but at the same time it is a very separated whole. (Dialogue 11, 1:08:15)

This illuminates further the frustration students have with being associated with Sandusky. They are already disconnected from each other in terms of various limitations such as race, interests, and the sheer size of the university. For outsiders to associate the students with a sexual predator, let alone to lump them in with a multitude of other students fails to acknowledge their sense of individuality.

While expressing this internal paradox of being connected to a disconnected institution, some students identified with the feeling of needing to defend Penn State. In one conversation, we came to a place of discussing the “rules” for being a Penn State student. In other words, what are the unspoken expectations for students that would be taboo to go against?

I think one main rule is defend it no matter what. No matter what anyone says. No matter what it's about. No matter whether or not you know if they are right or wrong. You defend Penn State. It's just like an unspoken rule. Whether or not you like the school. Whether or not you're having a good time there. That's just what I see. (Dialogue 11, 1:21:15)

The connections students talked about feeling were concrete in some ways and yet difficult to get a hold of:

I want to love Penn State and I do...but...when I first came here, I didn't even get football tickets this year...And I want to say I love Penn State, but what do I love about Penn State? The campus is beautiful and I love my friends and I love THON, but actually I hate a lot of people who are involved with it too. (Dialogue 11, 1:01:10)

And so another part of being a student and a feature of that experience is this sense of connection with the university that is also undermined by the size and diversity of its members. Underneath all this is a dull sense that one should support the institution and feel positively about it. Not only is it difficult for students to identify with the university in any holistic sort of way (i.e. beyond the fact that they attend it), but it is also difficult to identify what the university is itself and how a particular experience fits in with it as a whole.

Analysis

To summarize, we've examined a few of the insights that some students came to while participating in these dialogues about themselves and the institution they make up. They are frustrated by the university's seemingly blind compliance to whatever the media and outsiders demand. They see that, in some ways, it might be that they are being encouraged to forget what has happened and that not much has actually shifted in terms of their experience at the university. They think of themselves as being connected to Penn State, but Penn State is large and it is difficult to know what one is connected with outside of the fact of attending the school. Each individual gravitates towards a different aspect of Penn State. This creates a degree of separation that is rarely acknowledged. What's more, although everyone connects to individual parts of the university, there is a subtle pressure to defend the whole institution that some students have to reconcile with their level of investment and the quality of their time spent at the university.

The format of the dialogue led to the potential for these insights in a number of ways. By going beyond the opinions about what the university has done and going deeper into the meaning and significance of these actions, this notion of the "symbol of ignorance" that the vacant space of the Paterno statue represents could be vocalized. By not solely focusing on the dominant narrative (e.g. "We are Penn State.") we were able to explore the other side which for some people entails being on the fringe or the outside of an institution that seems to be homogenous and harmonious. Finally, by exploring the "taboos" of Penn State and inviting students to think

about what sort of expectations and pressures they feel, students were able to see how defensive they are about the university and that this need to defend may at times be irrational.

On any college campus, it can be difficult for students to understand where they fit in and who they want to be in the world. Beyond that, we rarely take the time or are capable of doing the work that is necessary to re-examine our most basic assumptions about ourselves and the world around us. Dialogue invites us into that place of contemplation and enables us to come to a clearer understanding of ourselves by encouraging us to articulate our values through the experiences we have had and the ways in which we respond to each other.

Understanding Others

Dialogue helps us understand others in at least two ways. By having an encounter with others and hearing their stories, opinions, and assumptions we learn more about them. By having an encounter with others and by hearing about and thinking about others (even those who are not present), we learn more about our own basic assumptions that govern the ways in which we interact with and understand them. By working through our own assumptions about others, we can come to a clearer understanding about them.

Description

Students who were in Hong Kong couldn't focus in class after hearing of Joe's death, I didn't understand, but then I came here and saw the spirit of the school, they are synchronized with the school, everything is blue and white, everyone is crazy about football and other sports, people wear PSU. (Dialogue 1, 28:00)

As a native from Hong Kong, this student had a difficult time understanding the strong emotional response that American students had after hearing this news. For him, the concept of being so connected with one's school was completely foreign.

Students were watching videos of the riots and JoPa supporters, they were crying, we didn't really understand, in the Netherlands we are not as connected to our school, we go home frequently, here it is very different, there is nothing here but Penn State, people are so connected...Now that I'm here, I understand the connectedness a lot more, the football is crazy, I think it is an American thing, I noticed that in the states that once the scandal happened, all other schools jumped on Penn State, the students, and faculty, it's unnecessary. We were canning and

people made comments about Sandusky not to us, but to others who were with us. I don't understand how it is connected with each other. (Dialogue 2, 15:00)

This observation takes the initial idea of connectedness beyond a feeling of camaraderie within a school to the ways in which a collective of people are viewed from the outside as a whole. For both students, the ways in which Americans treat football is "crazy." For the second student, it may be even crazier that the public can't seem to separate the actions of one man from the actions of the whole.

If you're not at Penn State, it's so easy to run your mouth and judge, if you're not inside the system it's completely different. I was actually in Disney world when the news about Sandusky was coming out and my parents' car was one of those cars that look like they came from a tailgate. The next day our car was completely egged. And we also wear PSU stuff and we got "scumbag" and "child..." Especially for me, I was a transfer. Things were great and then two months and the university went to shit. (Dialogue 9, 37:20)

This student makes it clear that there is some kind of separation between those who are "inside the system" of Penn State and those who are outsiders (the other). What he and many other students have learned through their experiences with outsiders is that they are cruel and unreasonable. Outsiders just speak without thinking and pose a threat to do harm verbally by the names they call anyone who associates with Penn State. At the heart of this animosity, the students saw deeper cultural values in play:

I think because kids were involved, people were a lot more...pissed off about it. You know kids, that sucks. I think that's why people were a lot more angry than they would be about other stuff. (Dialogue 9, 43:25)

They recognized that although within Penn State they felt very detached from child abuse, some outsiders connected them with it anyway. The students identified the ways in which our culture's

repulsion towards child abuse was influencing the way that outsiders saw them. It was striking to note how differently international students and American students talked about the sexual abuse of children. In general, American students seemed much more reserved and made it very clear that although they disagreed with being associated with it any way, that what the victims went through was very serious and important. Most international students were able to simply make their points without having to defend themselves or clarify that they thought child abuse was very serious. Many international students expressed that they would feel extremely comfortable talking about similar situation in their own country based on the way their cultures respond to such events.

It's the ego of Penn State. Everyone had good things to say, it was almost too good to be true. And once something bad happens, everyone goes ape-shit on that topic. I make jokes about it. It's whatever at this point. It's been a year. He's in jail. The victims can heal. We need to try not to make it too big of a deal.

(Dialogue 14, 55:00)

The word that some of these students might use to sum up to the ways they have seen others react overall could be “overreaction.” What this student sees as contributing to that overreaction is the previously spectacular record that the university had. Another student makes it even clearer:

I think it's because people love to hear bad news...and people like to see greatness fall, people rise and people fall, that's why they targeted JoPa.

(Dialogue 9, 1:06:00)

The idea that “people like to see greatness fall” showed up in some way or form in all fifteen of the dialogues that I facilitated. This idea is an important lens through which students understand outsiders, particularly the ways in which outsiders understand the university, students, and what happened in relation to the scandal. The dialogues highlighted the ways in which students

understand outsiders as being oblivious to the true situation and completely willing to believe whatever the media portrayed about Penn State.

Analysis

Overall, international students came to understand some key differences between Americans and their own people groups. They were able to articulate the ways in which American students are much more connected with their universities than they are. They also became more aware of the American culture's fixation on football and aversion to the discussion of child abuse. American students attending Penn State were able to acknowledge that they view outsiders as being misinformed and unable to truly access what is going on at the university. To the students, outsiders are also influenced by disgust for anything involving child abuse and an internal bias toward wanting to watch a great institution fail.

It's interesting to note that many international students (transfer students as well) would often express that they felt they had nothing to contribute to the conversation. Initially, they assumed that this issue was primarily an American one and even more specifically, that only those who had been at University Park when the scandal was coming out could truly say anything of substance about it. These students were invited to participate in any way that they could through the process of dialogue. Because in dialogue we assume that whatever people know in the moment is enough to come to a deeper understanding and because there is no specific agenda in terms of where the topics must go, it makes it very accessible for people of varying exposure or interest in a topic to engage with and learn from one another. The dialogues encouraged and enabled students to not only think about their own perception of the scandal, but to also consider what others perceptions are or might be. It challenged them to not only share stories in which they interacted with outsiders, but to also empathize in a way by trying to understand what an outsider's perspective might be and to consider how that may have come about. It might seem like most students pigeonholed outsiders, but there were moments when they were able to

understand why someone who did not attend Penn State might think poorly of it and the people who go there based on what happened:

I feel like that could be because the riots happened before the vigil...I saw that and thought this is going to bad. Maybe it's because, they were showing the riots and that was peoples' first impression of Penn State students, that we were going to support Joe Paterno and so other people got the assumption that we supported child rape and that's their first impression. If I saw that and then I saw a vigil, I wouldn't know what to think of them [Penn State students]. (Dialogue 9, 1:09:55)

In this case, a student is talking about why the vigil may have been overshadowed and disregarded in by the public and the media in the wake of the riot. I heard a lot of cruel things that outsiders said to students while I was facilitating these dialogues. It's not easy to empathize or understand other people when we feel like we ourselves are not being understood. Dialogue gives us a moment to challenge ourselves to understand what might be behind another person's actions or beliefs; even if only for a moment.

Understanding What Happened

Description

When I came back to my country, PSU was a hot issue, 'cause many people were confused with UPenn and Penn State. I was very embarrassed when they asked me about the scandal. Many people didn't know about Penn State, but this scandal made it more well-known. Penn state is the scandal university in Korea. Some professors and friends and family members asked me, "Is that your university?" I'm very embarrassed about it. (Dialogue 14, 34:10)

Throughout the dialogues, many students took the time to express how they saw the scandal itself unfold from the time the information first came out up until everything that followed after that. Part of the aftermath that this student from Korea has pointed out is that many people who did not know about Penn State before now know about it because of the scandal. This has impacted the way students are perceived and feel about being associated with the university, especially when interacting with people who didn't know much about it before hearing about Sandusky:

...the entire thing or even just the media, the entire thing for a very long time was actually turned around on Joe Paterno and the action wasn't [him]...why are you accusing [him] and leaving Sandusky completely out of the picture for so long on the news all you saw was Joe Paterno and it wasn't [him] it was Sandusky. Why isn't his name up? Why isn't his name everywhere? I felt like it was crazy how media can change people's perceptions and I felt like that was so wrong. (Dialogue 9, 49:40)

In many ways, then, some students saw the aftermath as a very intentional drive by the media to exploit the confusion and ignorance of most of their viewers in order to turn a profit. This was done at the expense of the university, its students, and Joe Paterno. Students felt that too much time was being spent on focusing on people who had nothing to do with what happened. Perhaps higher-ups and some individuals were complicit in what happened, based on what they did or did not do, but in terms of the actual harm committed students saw a disproportionate amount of focus being given to people in the background instead of Sandusky himself.

On the other side of that, some students saw this dynamic shifting:

They removed all the people that had anything to do with it, it's not like the students or staff knew anything about it. Everyone has finally realized that it is a bad apple kind of situation; they know that no one would ever try to do it again and lose their job. If it had been teachers doing it, it would have been a different story, even our major is different, we haven't really been affected. (Dialogue 1, 1:15:45)

For some students, the scandal is blowing over and they do not think that they will be affected by it in any kind of negative way. In their experience, people are more concerned with the education that Penn State students receive and do not associate students with the actions of Sandusky.

We don't have media here anymore. That blew over. But for us to heal and to get over it is going to take time. The trials are going to bring it up again, but then it'll blow over. It's just going to keep ebbing and flowing like waves. (Dialogue 14, 39:30)

While acknowledging that it will take time for healing to be complete, some students talked about seeing the scandal starting to blow over and anticipated that it would soon not be as big of a deal as it is now.

They also fail to put it in the bigger picture. Like 9/11 is an extreme, but it's true. You have to put it in the bigger picture and in the world. It's just one university. It's just one case of child abuse. Of course it's hard to put it in the big picture, cause of community and the closeness, it's hard to see outside that. But it's one case of that, it's not the world. (Dialogue 14, 54:20)

Some students felt that the whole thing was being blown out of proportion. For them, child abuse is a harsh and disturbing reality. They see the ways in which media and outsiders have reacted as being naïve and inconsiderate of larger factors:

I just don't like how everyone became an expert when it first came out, they just had their own opinions. There was no court proceedings, no due process or anything and people just formed opinions immediately, and I don't know, it was just terrible. News had a huge deal with it too and people's perceptions, that just bugged me. Obviously Paterno and McQueary should have done more, and Paterno never got his due process, never got to say what he wanted. (Dialogue 9, 48:30)

To these students, this overreaction on the part of the public and media muddled the legal process. Students questioned why the NCAA was moving forward so aggressively on a matter that seemed to have little to do with sports, which is ostensibly the extent of its jurisdiction. While acknowledging that, to some degree, this instance of children being sexually abused was being excessively vilified, they also acknowledged that more could have been done by people who had a sense of what was going on. They acknowledged that a lot of the outrage had to do with how outsiders viewed Joe Paterno and his influence at the university:

And people think that because we supported Paterno, like we loved him, so that affected people like "Why are you supporting this man which may have allowed this to happen?" They saw us as part of...it was a bad thing. (Dialogue 9, 49:15)

When thinking about the ways in which the university responded, students had a variety of reactions. Some were disappointed and angry; others acknowledged the difficulty of the situation:

Well I agree that the football team was wrongly punished. There has to be closure and justice for the victims. It's not black and white. You can't dish out a punishment and instantly make people feel better. Someone needs to get punished and these football players are getting punished even though they didn't do it. It's hard to find an appropriate way to bring justice for the victims.

(Dialogue 2, 30:00)

A lot of students resonated with this idea of Penn State being scapegoated in some form or another. To them it was clear that the punishments didn't seem to really line up with the information they had about what happened. To contrast the views that media was the primary factor in this mismatch, other students saw it as being an inherently difficult situation to appropriately rectify:

Besides paying the victims, there is not much more you can do for them. I can't imagine something that [we] would do to make it good again. When big things like this happen, people don't want to talk about it because they are embarrassed. There's a process of forgetting and accepting for the public after hearing news like this. What can people do to make up for people being raped? (Dialogue 2, 39:00)

In the wake of such a traumatic experience, it made sense to some students that many of the responses to what happened would not adequately or fairly address the issue. As they see the situation, no one really knows what to do and so all they can think to do is punish whoever they can in order to make it seem like Sandusky and anyone who caused this is not getting away with anything.

Analysis

Looking back, there were a number of different understandings that students had about what happened and the aftermath following the news about Sandusky sexually abusing children. It put Penn State on the map for people who had not previously heard about it. Some students saw the outrage as a function of Penn State's prestigious status and as an opportunity for outsiders to condemn the institution. To some, it was blown out of proportion by the media in order to take advantage of our country's fascination and disgust with children being sexually abused. Other students acknowledged the sheer impossibility of adequately addressing a wrong as deep as sexual abuse. Because there is no "correct" way to fix it, everything that follows will probably be unfair or inadequate or both. In these dialogues, students were asked to share their personal experiences that related to the topic. By hearing each other's experiences, they were able to make connections and new interpretations about the situation as a whole. Also, it was made very clear that no ideas or opinions were off-limits. Because the facilitators worked to hear from every viewpoint and didn't value certain perspectives over others, students were able to share from a wide spectrum of feelings and reactions to what has happened. Especially those with the perspective that this situation has been blown out of proportion; the dialogue was a safe place to share how they saw this situation unfolding.

Many of the responses students had to the aftermath were emotionally charged. Thinking back to the first comment, many students were embarrassed. If not embarrassed, perhaps upset or disappointed. Some were apathetic. As a facilitator in these dialogues, I was not only paying attention to what people were saying, but I also paid attention to how they said it. Oftentimes, a student would not mention how they emotionally responded until a facilitator pointed out the emotion behind what they were saying. This attention to the details allows facilitators to move the conversation on different levels. In this case, Penn State students were able to express their own emotional responses to the scandal. A number of students found this refreshing because

previously, they were only asked what they *thought* about the scandal by outsiders and family members.

Beyond merely having a discussion, in a dialogue we are encouraged to hear everything in a curiously inquisitive way. Rather than just asking “Why?” we also ask “What?” and “How?” From this place of honesty and exploration, dialogue allows us to understand events and issues from a number of different angles and to become clearer about how we have come to understand them.

Conclusions

The Content of the Dialogues

In terms of the content of the dialogues themselves, I was surprised at the similarities that each one had in common with the others. It could be the case that these similarities were a result of pulling all of our participants from the same college and major, but the high number of international students as well as students from other campuses would seem to balance that dynamic out in some way. As I stated in the introduction, I will not discuss my opinion about the subject matter, but I will tie together some of the themes from the content of the conversations in order to think about larger questions.

The issue of sports culture in America was discussed in these dialogues from a number of different perspectives. We had a portion of students who acknowledged that sports were an important part of their college experience as well as a portion of students who did not see it as very essential. Most international students struggled to understand Americans' fixation with sports, especially as it pertains to college football. Many of the students cited ESPN and the NCAA as major sources of information and authority on the scandal. For American students and international students alike, it seemed puzzling that the NCAA would put sanctions on the football team in order to address the fact that little boys were being sexually abused by Sandusky. This begs the question: What message is being communicated by curtailing the football team with sanctions in order to address sexual abuse?

Responsibility was a significant area of confusion within the dialogues. For the students, it was unclear who was really responsible and who was not. It was also unclear why outsiders seemed to view students as responsible for what happened. Students expressed the anxiety of

being a part of a whole that is too many things for them to really fit in to. Outsiders could see that even though Sandusky was the one who committed the abuse, that there were potentially other people who were complicit in those actions by not doing anything. Students had a hard time discussing sexual abuse and comparing American students with international students made it clear that our culture's taboo and stigmatism around abuse and those who have been abused makes it difficult to work through the issues. To what extent has society failed in its responsibility to educate us on matters such as sexual abuse and to give us the tools to address it when it occurs? Where does the responsibility for such education truly lie?

Many students shared that their friends and family members had serious concerns about their decision to attend Penn State even after hearing the news of the scandal. Students scoffed at notions like this or whisperings of employers who would not hire students from Penn State. Many students were certain that the scandal would have no impact on job prospects or future plans in any way. As long as recruiters are still coming and the academics are considered to be at a high standard, some students saw no reason to think about attending another school. This makes a lot of sense based on the context of higher education today and the motivations students have for attending college:

Current undergraduates want career skills and knowledge from college. Nearly three out of four, a proportion that has risen since the 1969 survey, say obtaining a detailed grasp of a special field (74 percent) and training and skills for an occupation (73 percent) is essential...By contrast, the percentage of undergraduates who rate as essential nonmaterial goals, such as formulating values and goals for their lives (52 percent) and learning to get along with people (38 percent), has declined significantly since 1969. (Levine and Dean, 38)

Even without this data, students expressed numerous times that being a student entails things like studying, going to class, and looking for jobs. Anything pertaining to the scandal falls outside of

this. To outsiders, this could seem apathetic towards the victims. In the dialogues, students kept trying to articulate that people were overreacting *and* that what happened was a big deal, but that they didn't have anything to do with it and are mostly helpless to do anything about it now. And so they continue to just try to be students at Penn State. In what ways should ethics play a role in a student's decision to attend a particular university? For such questions of ethics, what constitutes the university? Academics? Sports? Is it just anything that bears the name of the university in any way?

In some ways, we could say that what some Penn State students have gone through while interacting with the media and outsiders could be called trauma. We can think about blatant forms of this such as having a van egged or being called a pedophile while canning, but we can also think of more subtle forms like frequently seeing one's school on the news in a negative light or having to decide whether or not to wear PSU apparel based on what others might say. Most students felt that the backlash against Penn State was an overreaction driven by the fact that Penn State had had such a commendable record. How will the understanding that exceptional institutions and people are punished even more for failure than those of mediocrity affect Penn State students' pursuit of excellence?

The Process of Dialogue

What is the value of dialogue? For these conversations in particular it became clear that one of the unique aspects of this process was that Penn State students were able to share the ways in which they have been affected by the scandal without fear of being ridiculed. Many people expressed feeling a kind of catharsis after the dialogues. It was refreshing for them to voice their frustrations in a room where they felt understood. That feeling of relief and being understood can be a part of any dialogue. It is so rare that we take the time to listen to one another or have a moment where someone can truly hear us. Dialogue welcomes such moments.

Dialogue allows us to access a unique understanding of ourselves and everything around us. There are countless experiences and social forces that play a part in shaping our ideas, our own identities, and the practices that we take part in every day. These outside factors may not completely determine who we are, but the ways in which they do are often beyond our capabilities of perception and thought to grasp.

It is important to see that the different opinions that you have are the result of past thought: all your experiences, what other people have said... You may then identify with those opinions and react to defend them... It is as if you yourself are under attack when your opinion is challenged. (Bohm, 9)

Dialogue helps us work through our most deep-rooted opinions by inviting us to explore them without particularly worrying about the validity of the opinions themselves. In this explorative, inquisitive posture it is easier to take notice of where we may have received our deeply held beliefs. Dialogue assists us in questioning our own assumptions and refining our most basic beliefs into more thought-out positions.

In situations like the Sandusky scandal, dialogue also seems particularly useful in terms of thinking through our own personal responses to such events. When there are issues that don't have a clear or straightforward solution, dialogue can bring more clarity and guidance through the process of the group listening to a wide variety of experiences and opinions. Dialogue reveals to us our own thought patterns and ideas about what should be done in response to complicated problems, which is an even larger window into our own values as well as the values our culture has instilled within us. Entering into this larger, collective understanding could be the first step in finding a solution to some of the complex social issues we face today. In a word, dialogue rewards those who are willing to re-examine what they already know with the ability to see everything around them through a new light: the insights that come from truly listening to ourselves and others.

Appendix

Notes from Selected Dialogues

These notes are mostly loose transcripts from the five dialogues I chose to examine for this paper. My goal was not necessarily to capture what participants said verbatim, but to convey the crux of what they were trying to communicate. While these are not word-for-word transcripts, I did do my best to capture the specific way people spoke in order to maintain a feel of dialogue. “Intl” designates international speakers. Many international students were part of an exchange program through HRIM and came from China, Germany, and the Netherlands. “Fac.” is short for facilitator. Occasionally I wrote down my own thoughts, but in most cases the speaker is a participant.

Notes on the first dialogue:

(16:56-18:00)

(Intl) I think it’s unfair because I heard that actually the scandal is just about a kind of football coach, not, it’s not the main coach, but another one, an assistant. But I don’t understand why the act of an assistant would affect so big because in my mind USA is kind of a individualism country, so he is responsible for his own bad but why the whole school has to bear his... wrongdoing. So I just don’t understand why.

A participant says that it showed that the football program was too big and affected the rest of the institution (implies cover-up) (19min) She also expresses that the situation was such that students had to be affected even though they weren’t directly involved (20min)

Participant relates that he researched everything, but still doesn’t know what really happened, sees it as an issue across the board (we don’t really know/can’t fully know what happened). Also points out the separation between the major players and the students (from coach, president, players) (21min)

We’re taking a territorial stance just ‘cause it’s our school and people are attacking us because it’s the perfect time to do so. (23min)

(24min) Participant has never read anything about it. People never really talked about it, so I didn’t want to read about it.

(26min) I wasn't here when it first happened, I still planned on coming to the program because it's good, I wasn't really being affected my heart wasn't really in it when things were going down, also haven't looked up anything about it.

27:20 (intl) I didn't really know about it, maybe because it had to do with football and I didn't come for football, I came for academics.

28:00 (intl) Students who were in Hong Kong couldn't focus in class after hearing of Joe's death, I didn't understand, but then I came here and saw the spirit of the school, they are synchronized with the school. Everything is blue and white, everyone is crazy about football and other sports, people wear PSU.

29:50 My mom played basketball here, her car is navy blue, there is more than just football, there is a feeling of community here in happy valley, you feel it when you leave, some people focus solely on the football, not me.

30:50 intl I'm part of a choir and we had to sing the fight song over and over again

31:30 fac. Brings up the perspective that outsiders think there is a problem with the culture of PSU.

31:40 They think that PSU is so attached that they (PSU) would cover something up to maintain...I remember exactly where I was when I heard about what happened, I saw the riot, I woke up and felt embarrassed about what happened, not about Joe, but the victims of the scandal who will be affected forever.

33:30 The culture here is different than what I'm used to, not sure how I feel about it. I transferred from a commonwealth campus; the culture there is very different, not as focused on PSU. Here everyone wears the same clothing and is passionate about it, I think it's awesome that people can get so passionate about something.

34:50 When I talk to people from out of state who came, they also notice this passion.

35:30 fac. Shifts to asking about how they think PSU should move forward.

35:55 I think that even though people like the football, for some the consequences are not that big of a deal, we are still a great school (academically), I think that we should focus on keeping the education at the quality where it is, administrators, professors, and students should all be a part of the process.

37:30 intl What has happened has happened, PSU can learn from what happened, they have been doing things to prevent it happening again. I'm part of an org and work with kids; I had to get training about it

40:50 I really disagreed with the statue coming down, if we want to remember what happened and learn from it, then I think that taking it down is a symbol of ignorance (taking it down), it's not like people are gonna say they like what Sandusky did if we had left it up. If you're going to remember something that's not how you do it.

42min I think the media drove that process.

43:20 Maybe taking it down meant that he didn't deserve it.

43:50 The statue was already there, we didn't put it up after the fact, we can't rewrite history, taking it down undermines what we are taught as students (to be open-minded).

45min fac. I'm curious about what you all have learned from this

45:10 Everything comes out eventually.

45:25 "People who stand around and don't help when something is wrong are just as guilty as the people who allowed it to happen" it has changed the way I view things in my own life, by not doing anything about wrongdoing, we are almost condoning it.

46:20 intl "No matter how close a family you are sometimes when someone does something wrong you have to tell it out...PSU is a really close family and sometimes you will be inclined to heal your own family but sometimes if it's wrong it's wrong."

47min Consider what all the consequences may be of your actions.

47:40 intl I don't really know much about this case and so it is hard to get something out of it, I think telling the truth is very important, you're not supposed to cover anything that happens, because everyone has the right to know it

50:00 intl In China they tried to cover up a disaster in the past, eventually it came out, and it was worse, that's why I think it's bad to cover it up.

(50-55min)

The conversation migrates to entertaining the possibility that some times it might be good to withhold information. The government is brought up as an example, in certain political or military moves, secrecy is important; WikiLeaks is brought up, the problem of thinking it is ok to withhold and unintended consequences.

56min-58:30 fac. Brings the group back to relating the point to PSU moving forward. How are students going to take PSU forward?

58:45 I want to be part of a community where we can still stand proud, like the blue-out. I feel like there is so much more a sense of community, everything's out, we've been punished as much as we are going to be, now we're rebuilding, coming together, growing together.

1:00:30 intl It's my first semester, I don't know what it was like (before)...Now I feel like I'm in a family, strong community, I want that to continue. During weekends when I come to campus I see parents coming to football games with their children, that feel is still there even after what happened.

1:01:30 The recruiters for our major say they love PSU students, we wear (PSU) clothes, it's that feeling of the family.

1:02:00 fac. asks “Earlier we were talking about an almost...schizophrenia or identity crisis between...is Penn State a football program or an academic institution? So I’m wondering, how does this sense of family tie in with your academic experience?”

1:03:00 intl I think it’s all sort of mashed up together. Recently I met up with an alumni, she’s coming up every other weekend for football and that’s how we schedule our meetings. It’s all jumbled together.

1:03:30 We are in a tight-knit major, very involved with alumni, they try to help us out; they’re still here for us even after the scandal. A lot of people still want PSU graduates; I don’t know what it’s like for other majors. It’s a big school but it’s close.

1:04:34 For 44,000 kids I’ve never felt like I run into people I know so much.

1:05:00 You feel like you belong here, met friendly people who are willing to talk to me.

1:05:50 Even the professors, you can tell they went here and love it here, they want to help you.

1:06:16 I went to an info session and this guy had hired two PSU grads and the owner loved them.

1:06:50 They want us because of our education and we are well-rounded.

1:07:00 Recruiters come and tell us that our school is still good.
Parallel between the separateness of the HRIM program and the separateness of the football program (they are both just “parts” of Penn State), but if HRIM is good, then Penn State is good.

1:11:00 fac. Asks pars to think about how they connect or understand their own positive experience at Penn State in light of an outside perspective that there is a culture “crisis” at PSU and that they’re experience of connectedness is actually a symptom of a deep-rooted problem that allowed Sandusky’s actions to persist.

1:11:30 I think because the professors and faculty keep us at ease, as long as recruiters still want us and no one here is freaking out, everything is ok.

Fac. makes a connection that an implicit assumption is that everything is ok here (Penn State is still a “good” program) as long as recruiters still want to hire PSU grads.

1:12:50 I don’t think that would happen (that people would say it was a bad program just based on the scandal).

1:13:30 It depends on what area it happens in, people won’t be concerned about PSU students unless something is going wrong academically. I was embarrassed by the riot, the only next step now is to come back and be positive, there has to be a point for rebuilding and an end of arguing, we’re still going to get a good education.

1:15:45 They removed all the people that had anything to do with it, it’s not like the students or staff knew anything about it, everyone has finally realized that it is a bad apple kind of situation, they know that no one would ever try to do it again and lose their job. If it had been teachers

doing it, it would have been a different story. Even our major is different, we haven't really been affected.

Notes on the second dialogue:

13min intl PSU students in exchange program in Hong Kong didn't want to talk about it. Our friends were really sad. We found out about the scandal, a guy was raping kids...

15min intl Students were watching videos of the riots and JoPa supporters, they were crying, we didn't really understand. In the Netherlands we are not as connected to our school, we go home frequently, here it is very different, there is nothing here but Penn State, people are so connected.

17:35 Since it's such a small town, everyone knew about it, it's surprising to find that people don't know about it at all (intl), when it first broke, we were all talking about it. It's a reality check, this is a big deal, but there are other things going on. It brings the school together; some people only want to see the good in PSU and not the bad.

19:50 intl Now that I'm here, I understand the connectedness a lot more, the football is crazy, I think it is an American thing. I noticed that in the states that once the scandal happened, all other schools jumped on Penn State, the students, and faculty. It's unnecessary. We were canning and people made comments about Sandusky not to us, but to others who were with us. I don't understand how it is connected with each other.

21:30 intl I don't understand why a lot has been taken out on the football team. They haven't done anything. I don't know if it is an American thing. It seems illogical. It seems like a random punishment. Maybe if I was on the outside I would say everyone deserves it, but now that I'm here and see how close everyone is I don't think it makes any sense...there is a special atmosphere here, everyone is friendly and welcoming. People here can relax and our friendly, they love the place, I think loving the same thing makes it easier for people to get along.

24:35 intl For me it makes a big difference that people really live here for four years. In America it seems that community service and charity is more crucial since there isn't as much of a social healthcare system. (She cites THON). Together we work on some goal, the "we are" mentality. When we were in Hong Kong, one student would randomly yell out "we are" and someone would almost reply "Penn State." You can find penn-staters everywhere. If I yelled out my school from the Netherlands, no one would know it.

27:15 I was in the second mile (he explains it). I got to meet him. He came to our school five or six times. It got shut down after the scandal. People were saying that he used the program to get to the kids. I don't know anything about that. We met him. We met Joe Paterno. I'm a Texas fan. I didn't come for football. I'm a little bit of a minority. The student body doesn't really think about the scandal anymore. It's sort of a terrible thing.

30min Well I agree that the football team was wrongly punished. There has to be closure and justice for the victims. It's not black and white. You can't dish out a punishment and instantly make people feel better. Someone needs to get punished and these football players are getting

punished even though they didn't do it. It's hard to find an appropriate way to bring justice for the victims.

33:15 intl I think students need to go out and make a good presentation to the public (like canning and THON). If you do good things people will realize that you are good even if people around you are bad. Even though I'm an exchange student, I'm still proud of the students and this school. I think what the students have been doing (posters, t-shirts) is good. A friend of mine was in Disney in la with PSU shirt and someone affirmed them.

35:30 intl But what I wouldn't do is push it too far, it might seem fake (doing good). I think we should continue what we were doing and remember what happened. Also do whatever we can to prevent it from happening. We should make people aware that anything can happen at any time. This is the moment to show what a Penn State student is worth. It's not only football, it's also the school...it's more than that. They are more than whatever happened.

37:50 intl You can have an accident happen at any time. What can Penn State do? We can only do so much. There is no way to identify (pedophiles). Penn State isn't safe, just like everywhere else.

39:00 intl Besides paying the victims, there is not much more you can do for them. I can't imagine something that would make it good again. When big things like this happen, people don't want to talk about it because they are embarrassed (victims and criminals). There's a process of forgetting and accepting for the public after hearing new like this. What can people do to make up for people being raped?

40:40 Essentially, he is giving an example in which someone was abused as a child and made it out ok (a pitcher, very successful) We can give support.

(fac. asks them to imagine what Penn State would look like if it was unsafe.)

42:45 If Penn State was unsafe, there wouldn't be as big of a turnout for sporting/entertainment events.

43:40 intl If PSU was unsafe, there would be random strangers around, drunk. A while ago there was an incident in west halls, a person yelled at a black girl and said they would kill her. We watched a video and talked about it. There are so many different races and groups of people and they don't always get along.

45:20 intl If PSU was unsafe, there would be more security guards and curfews/restriction.

46:35 intl I think campus wouldn't be clean or well maintained.

47:00 intl Because people feel so safe, sometimes they are irresponsible. A girl left her door open in the dorms and had her laptop stolen. People let strangers into residence halls.

48:00 There is usually staff or some kind of custodians in buildings keeping an eye on things.

50:45 There have been other riots. They almost happen once a year. Usually nothing terrible happens. People say we idolized JoPa, I think it is just a basic respect. We did this because it's our school, others would do the same at their own school.

53:00 intl The riot was confusing at first, people were supporting JoPa.

53:55 intl Maybe students could get in contact with the victims to show empathy and to show that they care about what happened to them. Maybe it's better to stay closer to the victims rather than one person. Students could create a club or a group against child abuse. They could try to understand the situation better and what it might be like for victims.

1:00:00 intl I think things like this happen everywhere, like with the church or the Second World War. People don't want to talk about it, they suppress it. It was a single person who was responsible for this abuse. You can't connect that with the culture of Penn State. In Germany, we talk about child abuse. I think people here are much more conservative. (She was one of the few to refer to it as "rape") We would use the word for "rape" in Germany. We talk about what happened in World War Two. We don't respond by not talking about it. People should do that here as well. People should be open to talking about it and say, I didn't do anything, I'm a good person. What those people did was wrong, but I didn't have anything to do with it. "Show what you feel, but also see the facts." We have to talk about it in Germany (Holocaust) everyone knows about it, we have to talk about it. Maybe in a few years it will be put behind Penn State and they will be able to just talk about it. Maybe there should be a new Penn State. More efficient and better.

1:06:15 intl Dutch people are stereotyped as being very straightforward. When you are 13 you have a year-long class about general education and sex/reproduction. In higher education you might learn more about abuse. A few years ago in the Netherlands there was a man in kindergarten and the response was...they isolated the perpetrators and punished them. Then they worked with the kids to provide whatever kind of support they might need. There are more intense background checks for kindergarten teachers. This scandal (PSU) was in the Netherlands...For students here, it's something that will just need time. The main person is dealt with and now people just need closure.

1:12:30 intl In Germany there were priests raping children. Who was responsible? People knew about it. People who were already against the church attacked them even more. People still say the church is bad. People still say that Germans are racists. But you learn to deal with it. It's embarrassing. I didn't do anything, but I was born as a German.

Notes on the ninth dialogue:

31:20 I saw that last Saturday, the new president walked on the football field and was booed, what do you think?

32min I saw that too I didn't understand why.

I think he's doing the best he could in this situation.

He stepped into a shitty situation.

32:45 I think people outside of Penn State are following it more than I am.

32:50 Not to sound insensitive, but it was so long ago. When I go home it's the first thing people bring up. They ask me about it and I just say it's old news.

33:35 Did anyone here really follow it? – mixed response

33:45 I didn't feel like reading...not that I didn't care, but I was just like, it's just too much and it's been going on for a while and so I didn't know how to...I didn't trust what was written about it anyway...

35:13 I was just so proud to be a PSU student and tell people. It's such a great place; JoPa was a great guy who did great things. Brought an essence of family and "we are." For people to think it's not good sucks. It's not that I'm not proud to say I'm a Penn State student it's just that everyone's perception of PSU has changed. It's not like the students did anything, but it's just what people say.

36:15 When people ask me questions about it I get in a bad mood because people are so quick to judge. Yes it was horrible, but it was only one person who did it, and to judge an entire university and students for that is...you're an idiot. When a person does that...'cause I'm not from PA and when I go home my friends make fun of it, but they knew nothing about it.

37:20 If you're not a penn-stater, if you're not at Penn State, it's so easy to run your mouth/judge. If you're not inside the system it's completely different. I was actually in Disney world when the news about Sandusky was coming out and my parents' car was one of those cars that look like they came from a tailgate. The next day our car was completely egged. And we also wear PSU stuff and we got "scumbag" and "child..." Especially for me, I was a transfer. Things were great and then in two months the university went to shit. I could have chose somewhere else, but it was just a bad time.

38:40 I feel like people that just don't know what they're talking about feel that way (the eggers) because they hear stuff on the news and the news blows stuff out of proportion and people take it way too much to heart. There is no reason to egg a PSU car, because you go there doesn't mean you're associated with a pedophile.

39:40 It's not just us, it's happened in lots of situations that are like that. I'm sure all of you have at some point felt some sort of ill feeling about some situations. Maybe not like this, but comparable I guess. I'm not just saying those people are in the right, but it's just human nature...especially if you don't know the facts about it.

I can't think of an example...some people will have a band shirt and people will automatically assume...it's a stupid example but...I can't really think of a situation, especially not for a university. I know there have been other...not scandals like that, but cheating, and stuff in big-name sports. Tiger Woods, you know that kind of stuff. Obviously we shouldn't, but...and I don't

think people are in the right for doing it in this situation, but people are just going to do it and you just have to take it with a grain of salt.

41:35 Something sports-related I can think of that you might not know because they covered it up...have you heard of the Syracuse scandal? And ESPN held a tape in which they said it wasn't their authority or their job to go to the authorities and so ESPN got away with it because they report news, and so they covered this up and no one knows. I look at it like, you said all this stuff about Penn State and you did that? And the situation happened around the same time as when the news came out about Sandusky and it was pretty similar.

42:33 UNC had that whole deal of making up 40 classes that their athletes were enrolled in that were completely fake. They were trying to get their athletes to have A's even though they're fake, and they haven't had any sanctions and I just think that's so unfair, which I know is a bad word to use, but that's how I feel about it.

43:25 I think because kids were involved who were a lot more...people were pissed off about it. You know kids, that sucks. I think that's why people were a lot more angry than they would be about other stuff.

43:35 "I feel like it would be totally different if the words 'child rape' weren't thrown into this whole thing. Like if Sandusky was like, doing stuff with his players I feel like it would be totally, not totally different, but I think anybody that sees the word 'child' and the word 'rape' next to it like..., especially Penn State too, wasn't Penn State one of the last sport schools that was never touched by any bad thing? And then when this happened it was just so easy for the media to eat up."

44:15 Speaking of media, I can't believe how easy they can persuade people without knowing facts. We were on ESPN nonstop and it just seemed like people were assuming things when we don't really know what happened. I mean we're supposed to be a country that, if you're in trouble or someone thinks you're in trouble you're innocent until proven guilty, but nowadays, no you're guilty no matter what. We're just going to rush and assume that you're guilty and so the media can just say what they think and people just believe what they hear. I think it's absurd.

45:15 And they call it a "sex scandal" which is not the same thing really as raping...I mean I don't know...I don't know what a "sex scandal" would be. I kept hearing it be called that.

Tiger woods?

Yeah.

I think that pissed me off too, because kids were raped, it's not a sex scandal it's different you know, I think that's why people got pissed off about it...people were just annoyed in general.

46:55 I feel like we lost individuality, because, since I'm from PA a lot of my friends I graduated with know Penn State and know that I'm here, and they still...there were multiple tweets and stuff bashing Penn State and it kind of sucks because I called them my friends and because I love

this school and it makes me think they view me as just another penn-stater that is involved with this whole terrible situation...

47:55 I've dealt with a lot of people on the matter... It depends on how smart they are... 'cause you can tell with the people who can recognize that it was an administrative thing, but there are people on the low end who call students "child-touchers." It's crazy. And you get the people who will ask you what you think and will talk to you about it, but it depends on how smart they are.

48:30 I just don't like how everyone became an expert when it first came out, they just had their own opinions there was no court proceedings, no due process or anything and people just formed opinions immediately, and I don't know, it was just terrible. News had a huge deal with it too and people's perceptions, that just bugged me. Obviously Paterno and McQueary should have done more, and Paterno never got his due process, never got to say what he wanted.

49:15 And people think that because we supported Paterno, like we loved him, so that affected people like why are you supporting this man which may have allowed this to happen? They saw us as part of... it was a bad thing.

49:40 On the Paterno thing, I think one of the things that like, really for me actually pissed me off when people would come up to me and have comments, was that the entire thing or even just the media, the entire thing for a very long time was actually turned around on Joe Paterno and the action wasn't Joe Paterno and that really made me mad.. Why are you accusing Joe Paterno and leaving Sandusky completely out of the picture? For so long on the news all you saw was Joe Paterno and it wasn't Joe Paterno it was Sandusky. Why isn't his name up? Why isn't his name everywhere? I felt like it was crazy how media can change people's perceptions and I felt like that was so wrong. And after everything he has done for the school, so many people don't really know or didn't know about Penn State before, now they think they know all this stuff about Penn State, many people don't know what Paterno did unless you are a Penn State student.

51:15 Yeah I had friends that didn't even know that Sandusky had anything to do with it. They just hear Paterno on the news constantly, and reporters came to my school, I went to a branch campus, and all they wanted to know about was Paterno, it was more focused on him than anything.

51:34 I feel like just because he's an icon of Penn State, people might not know about Penn State or Sandusky...

51:52 It seems to me that Paterno was an easy target because he's such a big name and I mean that makes for a great story. No one wants to hear about Sandusky who I didn't really even hear about it before this, people want to hear that it's Paterno's fault because that will sell and that's the media's job.

We shift and ask them how they responded when they first heard the news about Sandusky.

52:55 I remember just being so shocked and as the week went on thinking is this really happening, it almost felt unreal to me. And I was doing Paternoville that week when everything

broke, for the last game. I just remember going there and just feeling like I was in a different world. It was far away from school, and the riot, and everything like that. I felt like I was just coasting through everything going on. I felt helpless, like I wanted it to stop, but I couldn't do anything about it.

53:35 Something I will always remember, like things our generation will always remember, like 9/11. For Penn State students, like I will always remember the day they fired Joe Paterno, walking out of my room and my roommate pointed to the TV and looking out my window towards College Ave. and seeing all the people. I feel like that's something I'll never forget, obviously as a penn-stater. I feel like this whole story is very defining for our generation, even if you don't go to Penn State, the news has been Penn State for the last year.

54:30 I was confused at first, before you heard about child molestation, because Schultz and Curly were getting charges of perjury I remember at that point thinking, "what's going on?" It kind of flew under the radar, but once you found out the big picture, that's when it started taking off, and as that went on, I felt a mixture of anger and it was a lot to take in.

55min I remember the papers everyday had something to do with...before it wasn't a big thing, but I think it was the day he got fired, I was coming up from class and all these people walked by me, and I thought it was a pep rally, but then I went home and saw everything.

55:25 I remember the next morning everybody getting up and walking into Keller and Mateer and Daily Collegian stacks, people literally running away with them, but I was asking people can I please have one? My dad would like that. And people with stacks wouldn't do it.

I did that, I have a stack under my bed. 'Cause, like 9/11, you were there, it was everything, my dad has stuff from that.

I did that, I tried to get a paper throughout each event. Because the Collegian is Penn State's newspaper. It's not like the paper back home...maybe down the road or maybe just cause you're Penn State. I wanted one.

57min Going back to it coming out, but not really being anything, I remember there was that one little article on a Friday and I didn't really read it and I remember talking to my mom that weekend and she was saying this is gonna be huge, this is not going to be good, and I was like I don't know what you're talking about. And then that Monday...she was right. It is bad and it is huge.

57:30 My dad said the same thing, 'cause he went here, years back, this came up and my dad was like, ah it's back, it was already there, reported about it...I don't know. I don't think people realize that it was already brought up.

58:15 I feel like as students, even just following it in general, I don't know if it's just our everyday life that we are so involved with the school that we just have a lot to do throughout the day, I don't know why, but I feel like I'm so much more uninformed than non-students. The people who aren't in school are the ones who are saying something or asking something about the

situation going on, and I don't know if it's just cause we're focused on school or other things, but I feel like we're just trying to be students, and everyone else just wants to make a big deal...don't get me wrong, that sounded really bad, it is a big deal, I feel like they want to make it something more than like what we want to do, we want to keep going and trying to continue to be students and they want to harp on it.

59:45 I had no idea anything happened and the way I found out a majority of it was my dad sending me emails asking me what was going on. I remember I came back from class and my friends asked if I heard what happened. It was definitely weird 'cause I was constantly getting emails from my dad asking what the atmosphere was like. At Altoona it was kind of the same feeling, still a Penn State student whether you go to U-Park or not, but it was just the same thing, everyone was angry, felt like our leaders failed us, didn't do their jobs, didn't keep kids safe, anger more than anything. I guess it was kind of unreal that we were going to Penn State and all this stuff is happening. Worldwide news and we were in it.

1:01:10 I remember being up here and all these news truck every day, tons of them by old main, also every time I go home for break everyone's like 'How's it up there?' which is the last thing you want to talk about. It's like you're home now, you don't want to talk about it. When It first happened it was weird, my good friend her father and his father they all went here, and she told me before her grandfather died, he was talking about this whole thing, about Sandusky and stuff and she was telling me about it right when we were finding out about it. So that was the first thing I heard, it happened a long time ago, it's not like it happened two years ago. When it first happened, I tried to get informed so I wasn't clueless, but as the days went on it was kind of hard to keep up with it. There were peoples' opinions, some people said screw JoPa he didn't help those kids and then you had others who said no it's not him. It's still to this day people talk about it, but when you get right down to it, they don't really know what happened. PA I think cause it touches us a lot more, relatives and families, they kind of look into it to know the details, so when you're at Disney with people from all over the world, they probably just hear little bits about it, what the media wants to say, they probably just know the negatives about it, not that it's still Penn State and there's more to it than football and everything. I remember when THON was happening, we weren't supposed to affiliate it at all with...I don't know. I remember THON was the big thing they didn't want...they tried to keep the whole entire thing separate...

1:04:05 Last year's THON was a very good year for the students, but I think that a lot of people didn't know about THON last year, and I felt like last year's THON was a very good thing to show the nation that these students do this and these few people did this. Like we separate ourselves, but our contributing...it's almost a good thing that before this not many people knew about thon. But then that was something that if you're pro Penn State that was so easy to hold up about the students.

Fac. points out that the actions of many students have been overshadowed by the actions of one man over a number of years.

1:06:00 I think it's because people love to hear bad news. Last year THON was just a short story, but then this...and people like to see greatness fall, people rise and people fall, that's why they targeted JoPa.

1:06:25 I think that was why the whole school was targeted. For a while we've been...it was up, that was why they attacked us so much, cause up until then our record was "perfect" and then that happened and it was the one thing they could get us on.

1:09:00 I think the vigil really showed what Penn State students are all about, and the fact that they didn't really report on it is kind of depressing because this is really what we're about. We're not a part of this (scandal) we're students and we really do care, nobody wanted that to happen. The vigil was enormous and moving to hear the stories. It kind of brought everyone together, but it's kind of depressing because it didn't make news. The riot did, and that's what people saw of PSU students.

1:09:55 I feel like that could be because the riots happened before the vigil...and I saw that and thought this is going to bad. Maybe it's because, they were showing the riots and that was peoples' first impression of Penn State students, that we were going to support Joe Paterno and so other people got the assumption that we supported child rape and that's their first impression. If I saw that and then I saw a vigil, I wouldn't know what to think of them.

1:11:35 So I wasn't necessarily a "rioter" but I was there. When I saw that he was fired, I looked out my window and saw it. We went out to Beaver and kids started flipping the van. I heard from some people that ESPN casters were going around and asking people "Are you drunk?" or "Have you been drinking?" If they said no, then they left, but if it was clear that they had been, they would stick a camera in their face and start asking them questions. I remember that was when the riot police came and I was in the wrong place at the wrong time and I was literally 30 feet from the van. The cops came and we got maced. It was hell. It affected other students' property as well.

1:14:10 My experience was a little different. I lived in Penn Towers; my window looked where all of that was going on. I must have seen 20 cops in riot gear and with mace. I just wanted to watch, I didn't think they should've rioted, but I wanted to watch. There's always that guy with the fireworks. People chanting and yelling. People get close to the cops, but then bitch out. I think it did make us look bad. I was in the Bin Laden riot. I had fun with that one and the cops let us, but with this one you knew it was going to be in the papers. It's was going to be a huge black eye again, so I watched it from my window.

1:17:10 I wasn't here for the riots, I came from another commonwealth campus. And there was a small riot at our campus, and it wasn't so much that people wanted to be part of the riot, but were just there to see it and see what was going on. It reminds me of how we talked about wanting newspapers earlier. We always want something in our hands when something negative happens. Why didn't we get newspapers to celebrate THON? Everyone does it, I don't know why. Naturally as people we look at the negative, all around the world and we do it too.

1:18:50 ...but I do keep THON papers (comic)

But overall, negative things are big staples in our lives. I mean, even my mom said that that riot and all those things happening, she told me I should probably go to the vigil and stuff. That's an experience that you will never forget. But I didn't want to celebrate something bad...didn't want to remember the whole thing.

1:22:40 I went to the vigil, they had the stadium lit up and the sky was purple and there were crows, and we had candles and stuff. I wasn't that into...I love the school, but I don't get so spirited, but at the vigil, I was about to cry seeing how upset everyone was. My dad is similar, he doesn't get very into things like this, but he was very upset and wanted to come to see everything.

Fac. summarizes and makes a connection with a comment made earlier about how people see one side of an event and blow it out of proportion with 9/11.

1:28:00 I remember that day perfectly. From the moment that it happened. Now we've been taught not to put that on people, but it's just something that is naturally in the back of our heads. It's just natural.

1:28:45 I just think it's that people don't forget. It's always going to be with you. When I was at JoPa's funeral, I won't forget that, and I was there for his 409th win and that was one of the happiest times for me. I won't forget.

1:29:45 My mom had a serious conversation and she asked me if I wanted to continue at Penn State because people will make assumptions about the school. I told her I will stay and I don't think it will affect me. And even if an employer were to bring up that situation then I wouldn't want to work for them. But I do think it's something that will affect students in the long-run, as bad as that sounds.

Notes on the eleventh dialogue:

36:20 I'm new to Penn State, the whole thing surfaced while I was at another college, and so from an outsider's perspective, it was kind of just overwhelming, a lot of people from my high school went here and so it was all over Facebook. I think we can all agree that what happened was disgusting. It has been interesting to come into it and see how the schools has adapted and changed things. My first impression was hearing about the scandal. It was impressive to see how much the school rallied together to overcome it. I don't think you would see that at most schools. It almost brought more of a sense of community to the students and faculty and the surrounding area. I don't know much about the sanctions. I work for the football games but I don't go to them. It's sad to see how it's affected the Paterno family. Sue doesn't really even come to the games anymore. It's sad to see that they can't be a part of something they've done for so long.

40:25 Well this is my hometown and it not only affected PSU but the whole town's reputation. My brother commented on how a coaching change can open up others' potential. There was a third string who became a starter.

41:20 I think the change has been a good thing. Whenever, freshman year, all the way to what happened, I feel like I was living in a bubble like this is Penn State and this what you do at Penn

State. But this made people rethink what and why Penn State is what it is, and why we have the values that we do. It was goo that the environment changed and people come together. For me, I feel like Penn State is what I make it now. There's less of this Penn State football thing.

42:30 When I was growing up, it was just like you go to Penn State. You go the football games, you get trashed. But now that this has happened it is causing to rethink our values. Like, yeah football is important 'cause it brings all these opportunities for people, but there is so much more to our college than football so the fact that we could come together and raise more money for THON, it's almost like after a forest fire something new can grow. So now it's like everyone is Penn State and we're all trying to make it a better place for everyone and bring more awareness to sexual abuse. I think every school should do that.

43:50 I like the word grow. We're not changing or making a 180, but growing and getting better. It's just shocking that it took something like this happening to spark that growth.

44:20 I'm really sick of the scandal, I don't give a fuck about football. I don't care. That's not even the thing about PSU that annoys me. I went through so many phases. I was really sad about Joe like we all were but then I felt like it was dragging on and I was like fuck Joe Paterno. I was sick of people dressing up like him and making it this big thing still making us look stupid. Like move on and yeah what happened was terrible no matter how much he knew or didn't know or how hard it would've been to do...Like he should have done something probably and he shouldn't have ruined everything for a lot of people here. It was handled horribly and I'm just really over it.

45:30 I was really over it by the end of last semester. It's definitely different for us being younger than it was for our parents and grandparents. It was such a big thing for people who were here and loved Joe Paterno.

46min I never thought I was going to PSU. I chose before I came to visit. I didn't know who Joe Paterno was. Yeah, I like college football, but I wasn't in to PSU football or anything. I didn't have this...like my parents still don't care. Everyone at home was on Twitter and obnoxious. It was annoying to have to defend myself. I was in a taxi and our cab driver asked us what made us want to stay at PSU. It's a wonderful school still.

47:20 Like anyone who hasn't been here, only associates PSU with the scandal now.

It's because everyone loves to hate on the popular person. We had a pristine reputation and people flock to the bad things. Even the thing that happened at Syracuse with basketball...but they're still making Sandusky jokes.

48:35 I did feel that way because I have the history, but then I was over it. Like the riot was just frat guys shaking light poles. I was so mad about it, I just stayed home. It made everyone look bad. It was just 10 drunk people and 5,000 kids just trying to watch.

49:50 intl That night I got a bunch of Facebook messages asking if I was ok, people were wondering if I was getting hurt in the riot. In this case, I'm more involved in Chinese/Taiwan

society here. After the whole thing happened, even people from other schools like the west coast, those friends asked me if I was ok. If that scandal was still...and after two weeks no one is asking or discussing, we move on too quick.

That's nice.

51:00 I don't want to talk about it. It's not anything I have a problem talking about, it's just that we've already talked about it so much.

51:25 I'm tired of going home and having relatives ask "What do you think about the JoPa thing?"

51:40 Where I worked I told people I was transferring to PSU, they said "Don't get molested."

52:15 One thing I was really upset about was, last year with THON many of my contacts called and said that they didn't want to support us anymore. I have been out canning and a bunch of people have said things to me. One of my friends was canning and someone yelled out "why don't you f*** some little boy!" It's crazy. We'd mention that we were from Penn State and some people would say, "Oh, that's unfortunate." I couldn't believe...I mean THON turned around and was a huge success. For something that I care so much about...how could people not want to help kids with cancer?

I don't think people really understand. It's just got the Penn State label on it.

They're ignorant.

53:45 It definitely brought State College together as a community. It's made me question the media. Like, I question everything now with the news. I went canning last year, and I went to Disney last semester and people gave me positive comments when I wore PSU gear.

55min Only some people can understand that one person can't ruin an entire school's reputation. We're coming back from it. The people who hate us are going to hate us no matter what.

55:15 The school was great before this happened and before Paterno. It's shocking, but it's like an evolution. You just have to keep moving.

56:00 My high school was like a direct channel to PSU. My brother went to Villanova, but he always comes to Penn State. All his friends are here. All my friends are here. It's normal. Last year I did the whole frat thing...way over that...you just do whatever everyone does and then something like that happens and it upset me, some of the students' reactions. Some students made such snap judgments. It (the scandal) broke down this image of what I had for Penn State as a whole. It gave me a new beginning about what my college experience could be. Like obviously Penn State is changing a lot so I can do whatever I want with my degree or my friends. I joined more organizations this year. I think the growth over the long term is going to be better.

58:50 Coming in as a junior I realized that Penn State is a clique. Like if you didn't come in as a freshman or summer session, this is a hard group to get into. It's interesting to see that the overall community is so tight-knit. Not to offend anyone, but it's almost like an elitist thing. Especially with THON. I work. I have school. I honestly just don't have time to do THON. My two roommates dislike me because I don't have time to do THON. Now I don't know if the scandal has made the school tighter or expanded them out from here, but it's weird here.

1:00:55 I don't necessarily think there are new values, but I think people are starting to look at the values that were recited to us.

1:01:04 There are values?

1:01:10 When I go to shows here and stuff I feel like 95% percent of the people here are rude to me. They don't like me and I don't like them. "Douchebags." Most of the people here are rude. They push through lines, they do whatever they want. They're douches now and they're going to be douches later. It sucks that we're still producing people like that. We're still going to have these dick families when we're older and they're going to raise their kids to be dicks. I found my thing. I'm in an org and I love them. Those people are here too. But there are the others too. And I want to love Penn State and I do...but...when I first came here, I didn't even get football tickets this year. Last year my friends would get drunk and leave...And I want to say I love Penn State, but what do I love about Penn State? The campus is beautiful and I love my friends and I love THON, but actually I hate a lot of people who are involved with it too.

1:04:25 I disagree that the majority of Penn State students are douchebags; I think it's just this age. Like this age is just starting to be independent, breaking away from everything they know, and a lot of people don't know how to do that. So what do they do? Especially at a school this big, they join an organization and they join what they know, so if they grew up knowing douchebags that's where they go. To the people in this conversation who have been saying that Penn State is elitist, I grew up in a very wealthy neighborhood (I lived in a small home) where a majority of the people who went to my school were very wealthy. My friend gets here by private plane. I've grown up seeing the most elitist assholes. So here, it's almost like a joke. I think this is the main age where you start to be a douchebag. I think there are so many people who are here who are so grateful to get an education. Where I grew up, people took it for granted. It wasn't that way for me. My parents have taught me to be humble. I never thought I would get into Penn State 'cause it's such a great school. People here appreciate the opportunity for an education.

1:08:15 One thing that bothers me about PSU is that it's so diverse, but they don't mix. You've all seen the flocks of black people or Asian people. And I don't think PSU encourages us to mix. This is the first time I've been told to sit in room and talk to people from all different backgrounds. The college I went to was similar to the one earlier mentioned. It was cool to see how much diversity there is here, but I was disappointed that they don't mix. We're all guilty of it. ... So everyone here cannot all be one thing. We all go to Penn State, that's all they really have in common. People don't really look much further than that. It's like you go to PSU, I go to PSU,

let's drink. People only try to relate on a PSU basis and not before and after PSU. It is a whole, but at the same time it is a very separated whole.

1:11:50 intl Nowadays we have too much information coming from everywhere...I'm not too involved with football or THON. I came here because there are many Chinese students and we have a society right there, I'm not saying that I'm not involved with groups of different people...In this conversation I feel a little left out 'cause...I'm not saying I don't care about everything that happened, but I have my life and there are other things that happen.

1:15:30 Honestly, I'm a follower. Everyone wants them to like them. So freshman year I hung out with people on my floor. They were all wealthier than me and I would go shopping with them, but then I realized that I don't like these people. So for me, you get into an organization and those are your friends. It's kind of the downside of a big school; you have to find a group where you fit in. I wanted to find people I could relate to. This year I joined THON. My one friend's roommate is against THON. I know some people are against it, but it's just something like...you need to find some place that's like family here because you're away from your family and people here just sort of naturally divide up. THON is something I did in high school. It's something I relate to. I danced in fifth grade. Everyone knows someone with cancer. I chose it and this major and I'm already making friends. You have to pick what you spend your time doing 'cause you could come up here and spend your time being lost.

Fac. makes a connection that there are taboos within the Penn State community (What!? You don't like THON?), asks them what you need to know in order to be a part of the PSU community. What are the "rules?"

1:21:15 I think one main rule is defend it no matter what. No matter what anyone says. No matter what it's about. No matter whether or not you know if they are right or wrong. You defend Penn State. It's just like an unspoken rule. Whether or not you like the school. Whether or not you're having a good time there. That's just what I see.

1:21:46 I love the education I'm getting, but this could be any school. I'm not here for Penn State, I'm here for the HRIM program. I've never done THON, gone to the creamery, the Penn State things. I'm here to get an education.

1:23:10 I'll defend it if I believe it. I'm getting a good education.

1:23:35 I was sitting waiting for a class and some girl came out of the elevator on the phone and said I fucking hate this university so much...and my first inkling was what!? I didn't even know what she was talking about so why did I get so defensive? You have to pride where you go. This is my home. I don't go home. Just to hear someone say that...I mean I'm in a THON group, but I haven't gone canning...but I haven't yet, I feel like that's a taboo.

1:25:10 If I hear someone who goes here saying things like that I think, well leave. If you hate it that much, transfer.

1:25:30 My first semester here, I hated it. I came here knowing three people and PSU is a hard bubble to break into. That could've been me on that phone. I'm a junior. By the time you're junior you have your friends. I was so in love with the academic program. I love the school but hate the people. It's not for everyone, if you're here for your education...but the social cultural thing is not for everyone. I feel like a lot of friendships here are superficial. Like back at my old school I knew all of my friends' grandparents. But here it's not that way. I felt pushed away for being extraverted. I guess I approached it the wrong way.

Fac. asks, So how are Penn State students supposed to make friends?

1:28:50 Drinking. (Almost in unison, then lots of people talking at once).

1:29:00 In classes we don't talk to each other. Maybe if I see you at a party, I'll say hey are you in my class.

1:29:20 intl I was in a class where the professor gave us time to get to know each other at the beginning of each session.

1:29:35 With 45,000 people, how are you going to meet people? I don't want to think I'm in a clique with my THON group, but I can't get to know 45,000 people. But I have best friends who will probably be in my wedding; I have a boyfriend who I'm probably going to marry.

1:30:25 I feel like you're friends with who's convenient.

1:30:27 I went to a branch campus and no one's even heard of it. It was like a second high school for me. I got here and mashed groups together and now I know people well.

1:31:15 I feel like that's just how life is.

Notes on the fourteenth dialogue:

20:10 intl What I found weird as not being American, I was surprised how much was taken out on the students, which seems like an American thing. When I was studying with American PSU students outside of the states, people didn't want to talk about it. It would be different in Germany. It would not be taken out on the students. It would be a big deal, but it would only be taken out on the higher-levels. I was surprised to see that students' spirits here were still high. When we were canning, people raised even more money and wanted to show a good side of PSU.

22:25 We've all had comments at us. Last year at Ohio State for a competition and I heard so many smirk remarks and it was hard to not get upset and angry, cause it wasn't us. We don't reflect what he did. We're students trying to get an education and get involved with extracurricular activities.

23:48 I have a really sick sense of humor. It's going to blow up. People are going to give their opinion without knowing anything about it. Eventually it will all blow over. It's just like Casey Anthony and Amanda Todd. Casey Anthony chloroformed her baby cause it wouldn't stop crying

and killed it...except she got off though so technically...and Amanda Todd meant to send this guy a picture of her naked, in the next couple of days he sent it out to the school, she tried to kill herself by drinking bleach, family found her, she got stomach pumped and was fine. After the students found out she tried to kill herself, they made fun of her even more and so she hung herself. So everyone was saying anti-bullying and all that stuff, but a couple of months have passed now and no one knows about it. That's what I mean. We had the candle light vigil and now it's like a big thing. It just blows over. You just lose steam. I was in a tattoo parlor, and this guy was getting a tattoo of Sandusky with a kid bent over with his bellybutton...so people take it different ways and eventually it just blows over.

26:45 People are different. Everyone takes it differently...

27:25 intl I really don't like it (referring to the earlier participant's "sick humor") I mean I get it. It's better to be horrible about it than to tip-toe around it. I think tip-toeing is the worst thing you can do. I think it's important that even if you're just a student, it's important that you have something to say about it. If someone asks you about it and you don't have anything to say, they will continue to have bad assumptions about you.

28:33 My defense mechanism is horrible jokes and sick and twisted things. I don't know everything about it. I can't recite facts and so I just don't care. People are going to just tell you their opinion and they won't change their mind.

29:10 I didn't talk about it up here. You don't hear about it. I would go home and people would be asking about it and I wouldn't know. The community kind of got over it. It's not our fault and it will never be. It's not in our hands. I'm here to study. Nothing is going to change what happened. I don't hear anything about it here.

30:15 Last year, friends from other schools asked me about it and I said honestly it doesn't affect me because there are more important things than dealing with something I can't control. I did my homework. I didn't do anything about it. It's not our fault. It's up to the higher-ups to do something about it.

31:10 As students, we don't even know the whole story.

31:20 No matter what you read, things don't seem to line up.

32:25 Why do people have to keep dragging things through the mud for absolutely no reason?

32:40 That PSU = scandal annoys me.

33min It's annoying, we just have to deal with it. We need to present ourselves as a Penn State student rather than "that" Penn State student. "That" Penn State student is like the riot. A Penn State student is here to get an education and better themselves.

34:10 intl When I came back to my country, PSU was a hot issue, 'cause many people were confusing UPenn and Penn State. I was very embarrassed when they asked me about the scandal.

Many people didn't know about Penn State, but this scandal made it more well known. Penn State is the scandal university in Korea. Some professors and friends and family members asked me, "Is that your university?" I'm very embarrassed about it.

37:10 intl I get mail from friends in Germany asking about it still. I'm not embarrassed to be here. It really doesn't bug me at all. There's so much child abuse in Germany and Europe. People forget about it. What's important is that you follow up. Have a conference, talk about it. That's happening here. It happens everywhere.

Fac.'s try to focus on "getting over it."

39:30 We don't have media here anymore. That blew over. But for us to heal and to get over it is going to take time. The trials are gonna bring it up again, but then it'll blow over. It's just going to keep ebbing and flowing like waves.

41:15 Acceptance. Hiring people for jobs. Our school was tarnished, people need to accept it and not hold it against us as students and get over it.

42:25 intl I think it's important to take something away from it. It happens all the time, but if you don't learn from it, it will happen again. If you're in a situation and you see something wrong, you should tell someone. You have to learn from it.

44:10 I think it's important that we support our opinion on it. That we're here to support Penn State. We have to support Penn State 'cause we go here. We need to show people that we support it and that PSU is more than what happened. We're not trying to ignore it. We're trying to show the outside world that we are trying to make things right.

45:10 It could've happened anywhere, but it happened here. We need to educate as many people everywhere so that this doesn't happen again.

It strikes me that even though the students don't see themselves as responsible for what happened, some take on the role of redefining Penn State's image in the wake of it all.

46:10 The blame is on us, so we almost had to step up to show that it's not our fault, we're trying to make it better. It's a responsibility we didn't ask for, but have to take it on ourselves so our name isn't tarnished.

47:05 I think you can choose. You can do something about it or step back and let others do it for you. We aren't forced to.

47:30 I feel like we do it without even knowing it. Like THON definitely helped even though we may not have noticed it. We're trying to do as much as we can without trying to do it.

49:00 intl I think this is why we study history. We can learn about some past accident and we can make sure it doesn't happen again. So this scandal might make the university make policies that prevent it from happening again.

52:20 I'm just done with it. I just joke about it now. I'm just horrible with it, 'cause that's how I accept everything. It's not like...it's not 9/11. No one died. Everyone survived. Don't get me wrong, rape is traumatizing, I don't want to talk down about rape because that's messed up. But you have to take everything with a grain of salt and laugh things off, because life's not worth living if you can't laugh something off. People want to have their opinion heard and that might be why it's hard for people to laugh it off. I just want to be a wallflower and get a job. Some people want to be overachievers.

54:20 intl They also fail to put it in the bigger picture. Like 9/11 is an extreme, but it's true. You have to put it in the bigger picture and in the world. It's just one university. It's just one case of child abuse. Of course it's hard to put it in the big picture, cause of community and the closeness, it's hard to see outside that. But it's one case of that, it's not the world.

55:00 It's the ego of Penn State. Everyone had good things to say, it was almost too good to be true. And once something bad happens, everyone goes ape-shit on that topic. I make jokes about it. It's whatever at this point. It's been a year. He's in jail. The victims can heal. We need to try not to make it too big of a deal.

56:00 Like have they not seen SVU? In every other episode there's a nine-year old girl getting raped. We don't think about that.

56:10 It's one case. It's one university. And there are a lot of worse things that could've happened than rape. Like Virginia Tech, that's huge.

56:24 Or like that other school where that kid walked in with a cross-bow and shot his teacher, then went home and shot his step-mom, then himself. I guarantee you the Chiefs, there's going to be so much about it, because that linebacker shot his wife and then decided to walk into the organization in front of the owner, GM, and head coach, and shot himself. People are going to forget. There's going to be all this stuff for the Chiefs, like give them emotional support and stuff, and they're gonna have a Chief shirt that has a ribbon for suicide prevention and people are gonna buy it. People are going to have this huge opinion. Just like this. We had the stuff about supporting the rain, child abuse thing. And they're going to have something in the NFL about suicide and in 5 years, it'll all be gone.

57:50 When it came out at PSU, like the rape, and then two weeks ago someone was tarnishing PSU's name, but he was doing something like rape, but it didn't make news. We're a big university. We're going to make big news, but stuff like that doesn't. We're cursed as a big university. Cursed and blessed.

59:00 People are always trying to push the envelope.

59:15 I'm just really over the topic. It doesn't really affect me, so I don't have anything to say about it. I'm from Virginia, so I hear more about Virginia Tech than I do this stuff. It was a huge issue when I was in high school, but I just didn't apply there, but it didn't really affect anything else. Sure VT's a great school, but I'm not going to put myself in danger. I came here for Penn

State. I'm not all for Penn State. I have my own organizations; I'm more concerned with those organizations than Penn State. I don't mind this topic; I just think it gets brought up again and again. It happened a year ago. They're trying to fix it. We can't do anything about it. What's the point in talking about it if we can't do anything about it? My sorority is something I'm a part of. We're spread across the nation. It's more important than what happens here to someone I don't know. I have control over things in my sorority.

1:03:30 fac. asks, Even though it could've happened anywhere, what do you think allowed it to happen here?

1:04:55 intl Nothing. I don't think it's a valid question.

It just happened.

Why do people get in car accidents? It just happens.

What "allowed?" It's a weird word to use.

intl It's a personality thing. There's one person who has something wrong with him, and there is one person who sees it and doesn't tell, or does tell. Different priorities and different persons coming into one place. It has nothing to do directly with here. It could've happened at Cambridge. If people have the wrong motives, it can happen anywhere. It's a reputation thing. It's an organization thing. It happens anywhere people feel like they have power over their children. Universities, parents...

1:07:30 He took advantage of Penn State by using us as a place. It happened to him and he chose to do it to them.

1:08:05 It's a huge school and things fall through the cracks. If it had happened at a smaller university, it might have gotten caught.

1:08:15 intl that's not true, you can't say that no one would see it at a bigger university. It might be that people don't care because they just think that someone else will take care of it. There's no excuse. That's the worst thing to say.

1:09:55 I'm just saying there are 100,000 people coming in and out and 40,000 people in the town. If people leave, there are maybe 15,000 people here. It is a small organization in a larger institution. I'm not making an excuse I'm just giving a reason for how this might have continued to go on for so long. Like the Catholic Church when that happened. That took so long to come out because it was a huge organization.

1:10:10 People say, "Why should I go through all this trouble? Someone else can report it."

1:10:30 I'm sure it happens at other schools and they just haven't been found out yet. We just got found out. It's gonna happen. It's going to continue to happen until they get caught.

1:11:10 Every 43 seconds in America there a child being abused, molested, sexually assaulted.

It strikes me that we're talking about child abuse almost as if it is inevitable. It happens everywhere and we can't do anything about it. But when we start to talk about Penn State, the rhetoric starts to shift to the coincidental. This stuff happens everywhere all the time. It's happening now. It just so happens that this occurred at Penn State... How is the way that I'm reacting and responding now a reflection of the reason... Is there a way I could reflect on my reaction now and perhaps gain insight into why Sandusky chose to do what he did here? And what I'm realizing is we go to this school, there are 45,000 people here and the majority of people here raise their hands and say "I have nothing to do with this." To be here and know that 45,000 people feel like they have no power... I'm wondering how that connects.

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Education

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
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Experience

World in Conversation, The Pennsylvania State University

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- **Facilitation Coach and Course Coordinator**

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- Coordinate and Co-teach foundational course in small-group facilitation which is developed by World in Conversation.
- Manage and instruct 32 TA's that facilitate discussion groups for the largest U.S. Race Relations course in the country.
- Identify, develop, and train a team of exceptional dialogue facilitators that provide feedback and guidance for their peers.
- Meet with facilitators on an individual basis to assess growth and advise on how to continue to be successful within their role at World in Conversation.
- Use the experience gained from over three years of facilitating conversations about social issues with World in Conversation to provide insight and clarity for the organization as a whole.

- **Dialogue Facilitator and Observer**

Spring 2010 – Spring 2012

- Co-facilitated numerous conversations about contentious issues, such as U.S. Race Relations, between undergraduate students at University Park.
- Took on a leadership position that entailed watching live dialogues and giving facilitators feedback both during and after the conversation.
- Shadowed an instructor for a small-group facilitation skills-based class in order to gain more experience as a facilitator and to continue to support the organization by training new hires.

Research Interests

I have very broad interests in philosophy, literary theory, and sociology. The ideas that spark my curiosity often lie between the intersections between these disciplines. I'm specifically interested in dialogue as a text and the ways in which it shapes and is shaped by the human experience; on an individual level, but also within a larger social context.

Scholarships and Awards

- The President's Freshman Award
- The Bunton-Waller Scholarship
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