



Everything is Illuminated

If you found yourself walking Downtown on Friday evening, you might have mistaken it for Times Square. Students, professors, community members and families came together to celebrate Binghamton's budding arts scene.

They mingled in a way we don't usually see outside of Restaurant Week, while the eateries, bars and shops Downtown bustled with activity. It was exciting to see so many packed local businesses and so many people milling around with friends having a great time. LUMA gave us not only an entertaining evening, but hope for the future — one where Binghamton has an arts and culture scene to rival any other major college town.

LUMA was a major collaboration within the Downtown community; local businesses and corporations came together to produce it,

with over 200 Kickstarter donors and a \$10,000 pledge to match support from Visions Federal Credit Union. So many people came together to help create a cultural experience that added vibrancy and a street festival atmosphere to Binghamton's First Friday tradition.

The event can be credited to BU alums, and the growth of a strong arts and culture scene will keep BU grads in the city. Binghamton University attracts some of the top students in the state to obtain their degrees. Almost always, we pack our bags after receiving our diploma, and never look back. But perhaps

LUMA, and programs like it, will turn Binghamton into a place that will make us want to stick around — if only for a little while.

But we still want to see more. BU students should be integrated with events like LUMA; any positive engagement between us and the community can only strengthen the University's ties to the Southern Tier, and can only draw more people to the area. And, if we're being selfish, events like LUMA can provide more opportunities for students to get involved and gain experience in the surrounding community; there's a wealth of

potential internships lurking in the development of a strong arts scene. Especially for students who live Downtown, these resume boosters are literally in your backyard. A stronger arts scene will mean you have something to take your parents to when they come to visit. It means you'll have something to do without having to travel an hour away to Ithaca.

We applaud the LUMA founders and creators for bringing such a unique experience to Binghamton. It's a step in the right direction, and we are excited to see what comes next.