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Civic engagement, service-learning, and university-assisted community schools are strong forces in making universities, as anchor institutions, engaged and responsible within their spheres of influence. By helping solve social problems, universities engage in the highest form of learning, come to understand social issues and problems, and escape the problem of inert knowledge, knowledge that is valuable only in a classroom.

Forward

David J. Maurrasse

The Anchor Institutions Task Force (AITF) is pleased to present this important issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* on anchor institutions.

Founded in 2009, the AITF (<http://www.margainc.com/initiatives/aitf/>) develops and disseminates knowledge and functions as an advocacy and movement-building organization to create and advance democratic, mutually beneficial anchor institution–community partnerships. It functions as an ongoing think tank, developing long-term strategies and making the case for the crucial role of anchor institutions in economic and community development.

The AITF was founded through a national task force that was coordinated by the University of Pennsylvania on how the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) could increase its impact and strategically leverage anchor institutions to improve communities. A report, *Anchor Institutions as Partners in Building Successful Communities and Local Economies*, captures findings from this effort.

The initial group that composed this report became what is now the AITF, which has experienced extraordinary growth. The AITF is now an individual membership organization with over 200 members. Individuals can join if they agree with the following core values: collaboration and partnership; equity and social justice; democracy and democratic practice; and commitment to place and community.

Now coordinated by Marga Incorporated with assistance from the University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships (the Netter Center's Director, Ira Harkavy, serves as the AITF's Chair), the AITF has been highly productive, having held or co-sponsored multiple conferences, produced publications, and influenced thinking about the role of anchor institutions in transforming communities among members, funders, policy makers, and others.

We face a palpable need for strategies to identify and leverage reliable resources to maximize opportunities and reduce disparities. These strategies must be inclusive and promote extensive participation from as wide a cross-section of populations as possible. The startling inequities and persistent economic constraints

of our complex world are manifested in localities, where disparities have not only persisted, but widened in the face of a stubborn economic downturn.

Anchor institutions are organizations that are rooted and enduring in their communities, and thus offer a range of resources. These resources have often not been adequately harnessed to address pressing needs in surrounding neighborhoods, cities, and regions. Institutions of this nature, such as institutions of higher education, do not tend to leave, even in the face of extensive capital flight. Anchor institutions can come in many forms beyond colleges and universities, however, including medical centers, libraries, churches, museums, community foundations, and more.

Overall, the definition of anchor institutions continues to evolve. A part of the work of the AITF is to refine this definition. Although anchor institutions are potentially indispensable features in successful community improvement strategies, the idea of being “anchored” reflects only objective reality. Certainly, some institutions bring resources to their localities by their mere existence. However, the AITF encourages anchor institutions to take greater action—to transcend business as usual and deepen their local commitments. In our view, anchoring is more than being present; it is an active commitment to reducing disparities and engaging in mutually beneficial, democratic collaboration. Not all “anchored” institutions behave in this manner, but our goal is to dramatically expand the number of institutions that identify with their responsibility to their localities. Our hope is in the critical potential of anchor institutions, in all their variation, to stabilize and transform lives and livelihoods in localities.

Much of the energy over recent years to involve anchor institutions in addressing local matters has involved community colleges, colleges, and universities, and the AITF is an outgrowth of the emerging movement to engage institutions of higher education in mutually beneficial, democratic partnerships in order to improve the well-being of their localities and regions. The AITF seeks not only to strengthen the practice of anchor institution partnerships on the ground, but also to raise national and global awareness of the significance of leveraging these enduring local entities in addressing today’s myriad social and economic concerns.

As interest in the role of anchor institutions continues to grow, the field of organizations addressing this topic expands as well. AITF members reflect the range of institutions of higher education (public and private, community colleges, colleges, and universities)

as well as different types of anchor institutions. In this regard, the AITF is uniquely functioning as a values-based movement organization that actively promotes the potential contributions of anchor institutions to communities, cities, regions, and society.

When the AITF announced a call for submissions to an issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* to our membership, within days we received 10 responses. This issue of the *Journal* emerges directly from the strong interest such a response reflects, and it captures the experiences, successes, and challenges of anchor institution–community partnerships as well as improving our knowledge of what it takes to create and sustain effective collaborative strategies.

The AITF is extremely appreciative to the *Journal* for this opportunity to bring the voices of some of our members together in this valuable collection. And special thanks also go to this issue’s editors: Eugenie Birch, David Perry, and Henry Louis Taylor. All three of these editors are on the AITF’s Steering Committee and demonstrated outstanding leadership in developing this issue. We hope that this issue will be an informative and compelling contribution to our thinking about the potential of anchor institutions, and especially colleges and universities, to strengthen communities.

David J. Maurrasse

Founder & President, Marga Incorporated
Director, Anchor Institutions Task Force

ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

Universities as Anchor Institutions

Eugenie Birch, David C. Perry, and Henry Louis Taylor, Jr.

Much has been made recently of the role of place-based institutions in the development of cities and regions (AITE, 2009). In fact, the whole notion of the “city” as a “region” is becoming rather compatible with the broader 21st century geography of “urban” (*Brookings Institution, 2008*). For humans, the whole concept of the “urban” is taking on a species-(re)defining nature. Almost everyone, especially beginning with the work of geographer David Clark (2002) and moving forward to demographers, such as the United Nations’ global specialist George Martine (2007), suggests that the human species has been forever altered—with more people now living in “urban” rather than rural settlements. Everyone in this emerging urban majority may not live in a city’s downtown district, but everyone does live in some form of conurbation or metropolitan city or region.

Just as the social and demographic conditions of everyday life for a majority of humans are shifting in the early 21st century, so too are the governmental structures related to these residential groups. In no place is this shift in the metropolis of human settlements more apparent than in the United States, where the conditions of policy nostrums and practices of the central federal government have increasingly “devolved” or otherwise shifted to the state and, especially, the local levels. Practitioners and scholars alike call this the shift from government to “governance.” Presidents, starting with Harry S. Truman and ending with Bill Clinton, have termed this ongoing re-definition of federalist government the move to what another president, Richard Nixon, most brazenly called the “new federalism” (*Biles, 2011*). At the local level, with the fiscal and structural re-invention of the local state well advanced, two operative words have become popular: “partnership” (between institutions, both private and public) and “privatization”—the outsourcing of policies and outright selling of services to private sector providers.

In the midst of such devolutionary and/or privatizing shifts to the local state, or what is called in Europe the “localization” of the central state (*Gaffikin & Morrissey, 2011*), the re-invigoration of “place” has become increasingly apparent. Even more clear has been the “paradox” that such reinvigoration of place in the service of the human species creates in the “space of flows” (*Castells, 1997, p. 378*) between and among the nodes of the “globalizing network societies” (*Castells, 1997*) of modern city/regions. Some practitioners call this the emergence of a global-local political economy

(Swyngedouw, 1997), and they shorten the entire frame of political economic reference with the term “glocalization.” However such practice is contextualized going forward in the 21st century, the role of *place* and the place-based institutions of cities and regions will be recast in new importance as one of the driving conditions of modern urban development and change.

Although market institutions and the corporate and productive capacities they offer are certainly central to the modern development of place, non-market, place-based institutions are also key “anchors” of place, for by their practices, they “root” or otherwise “moor” the people of the urban in place. The role of such *anchor institutions* is not static or un-dynamic. In fact, it is just the opposite—grounded in geographic fluidity (Bauman, 1999), or what social scientist Paul Ylvisaker once called the “elastic meanings” (Ylvisaker, 1989, Chapter 2) of “community.” Good examples of such place-based anchor institutions are universities, hospitals (“eds and meds” as the University of Pennsylvania’s Ira Harkavy calls them in AITF, 2009), community foundations, local governments, and key infrastructure services. All these and more have the potential to be exemplars of such urban anchor institutions—at once “fluid” and dynamic *and*, at the same time, rooted in place. Hank Webber and Michael Karlström (2009) suggest that such institutions and the conditions they exhibit are key to the geography of place and thereby “anchor” the community in real and palpable ways, saying that “anchor institutions are those non-profit or corporate entities that, by reason of mission, invested capital, or relationships to customers or employees, are geographically tied to a certain location” (p. 4). Readers will learn from many of the authors in the essays of this thematic issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* that the leadership of such place-based institutions seeks to understand and evolve their impact on their urban and rural communities. The question for all local anchor institutions is: What do anchor institutions do to advance their communities’ development?

As the title of this collection and the topics of the essays suggest, this is a thematic issue dedicated to the role of the university as a place-based, urban anchor institution. The literature tells us, as suggested above, that the notion of “urban” now stretches well beyond city limits, including the regions (suburban, ex-urban, and peri-urban) that make up what Brookings Institution studies of metropolitan America call “city-regions” (Brookings Institution, 2008). It is important to underscore the evolving contextual geographies of the actors in the essays that follow by suggesting that the spatial immobility of anchor institutions in central cities was considered a

prime characteristic of such institutions and their immediate areas when the term was used early on by the Aspen Institute. The essays in this issue of the *Journal*, however, show how the meaning of “city” and “urban” in such conversations has been changing. The policy and institutional discourses now embrace the central city and the suburbs, ex-urbs, and peri-urbs. The changing meaning of “city” and “urban” might not alter the “immobile” dimension of anchor institution definition; however, it certainly does change the urban space within which anchor institutions are expected to operate. Further, studies of urban life worldwide suggest that more than half of all humans now live in one form or another of “urban” settlement or city-region. Therefore, the notion of “urban” undertaken in these essays on the role of academic institutions in U.S. urban communities also will occasionally stretch beyond the “city” and into the “region.”

To repeat, just as the notion of “urban” has changed, so too the notion of *urbanite* has shifted, as the earlier references to demography suggest. The studies cited indicate that more than half of all humans worldwide now live in one form or another of “urban settlement.” With this shift in the “urban-ness” of the human species has come a shift in the institutions and the purposive practices of urban higher education. The essays in this thematic issue, either directly or indirectly, address these shifts in cities and regions, the increasing experience of “urban-ness” of human life itself, and the institutions and their roles in the city-regions of the United States.

Before we introduce the essays in this thematic issue of the *Journal*, and the ways they address the issues referenced above, we want to suggest that the entire topic of the university as an engaged, anchor institution is a strategic element of the modern academy (*Gaffikin & Perry, 2009*) embedded in the practices of university leadership. More precisely, top-level *leadership* matters when establishing a university’s approach to place-based engagement, especially in a research university, where decentralization at the disciplinary, college, or academic unit level is the norm. Clark Kerr, the founding chancellor of the University of California system, is reported to have described the organization of the academy as a group of disparate faculty members with a common parking problem. Others describe such decentralization as “organized anarchy” where, if “left to their own devices, most faculty members (and their departments) will bend to the daily preoccupations of research and teaching, satisfying ‘service’ requirements with a campus or faculty committee” (*Kellogg Commission, 1999, p. 43*) assignment. When it comes to a university’s reward system, this “anarchy,” ironically, does adhere to, if not outright produce,

order of two varieties. First, there is disciplinary order. A scholar's reputation is "substantially influenced by the disciplinary community at large, through the control of access to the communication network of the discipline—journals, presented papers, awards and other such anointing from the community" (*Kellogg Commission, 1999, p. 40*). Second, when it comes to rewards, this anarchy has the potential to generate a certain class system. Those who *do* choose to partner with communities or participate in public service, and make their disciplinary discourse local rather than national or international, are in danger of becoming "second class citizens" of the academy, subordinated to discipline-directed faculty members. Again it requires, as the essays in this thematic issue suggest, institution-defining leadership to activate and keep legitimate the practices of university faculty, staff, and student engagement.

A third element of the place-based or anchored and engaged higher education institution that emerges in the essays is resources or funding. Programs of engagement, especially those that seek to expand to sites of creative knowledge, need stable, recurring funding so that their efforts are clearly embedded in the long-term future of a university. A disappearing start-up account is not enough. If a university seeks status as an "engaged university"—an institution that through its place-based relations strengthens its role as an urban anchor institution—then this must be registered in the institution's fiscal and structural investment in the process. Again, the only way such resources will achieve recurring and/or institutionalized status is through leadership—where decisions concerning higher education will be reciprocal investments in the community, the city-region, or the *place* of which the university is a part.

Using the immediate features of university place-based engagement as a starting point, one important characteristic of the majority of the essays that follow is their being written by top leaders of the case study institutions. More particularly, four of the essays are either authored or co-authored by university or college presidents: Nancy Cantor is the chancellor of Syracuse University and along with Peter Englot and Marilyn Higgins has co-authored an essay on "making the work of anchor institutions stick." Here readers will see Cantor, Englot, and Higgins suggest that the geography of "place" is not, by itself, enough—time matters as well. A university, like Cantor's Syracuse University, must take the time to engage its neighborhoods, city, and region before it can really see itself as an "embedded" and, even more important, "trusted" institution of the region, able to build, along with a full constellation

of local partners, a *lasting* “civil infrastructure” and, ultimately, a “social infrastructure” of place or community.

This notion of lasting time is carried forward by other higher education leaders in this thematic issue. James T. Harris, the president of Widener University, has, along with Marcine Pickron-Davis, written what he calls a “retrospective,” decade-long review of the historical journey of his university to reclaim its role as a regional anchor institution. Harris and Pickron-Davis offer the lesson that the “anchoring” role of the university in a region *takes time*, and emerges in a host of collaborations or partnerships with other regional institutions of place such as hospitals and health-care centers, faith-based institutions, community organizations, and key market-based corporate entities. For Harris and Pickron-Davis, Widener University has taken time and reached out to engage partners throughout the region and, in the process, solidified its role as an “inextricably bound” anchor of regional growth and development.

The notion of leadership, and the resources and rewards such leadership has at its disposal, is made clear in two essays by the presidents of community colleges. Eduardo Padrón, the president of Miami Dade College, has contributed an essay on the place of the college in mobilizing the “engaging power of the arts.” Here, leadership in the person of the president of Miami Dade College makes a tremendous difference; the notion of reciprocity between the community of Miami and the world is clearly mediated through the college. As Padrón writes, the educational mission of the community college includes “quality of life in the community”—a community where the notion of “arts,” like the notion of “quality of life,” includes many factors—everything from public intellectuals to world leaders, to the cultural traditions of the diverse communities of Miami. Again, the importance of leadership as the center force enabling an institution of higher education to continuously and adequately engage the multitudinous issues and challenges of place is a clear feature of this essay.

In a brief reflective note, President Thomas McKeon of Tulsa Community College writes about the contributions of the college to the region’s emerging “entrepreneurial ecosystem,” in particular the synergy that has been created between the community college’s Center for Creativity and the new activities of enterprise that have developed in the southern end of Tulsa’s downtown corridor. McKeon has focused the efforts of the institution on a “place” filled with long-term historical roots of economic dynamism and

renewal, allowing for change that, as he states in the essay, goes to the heart, “the very essence of higher education.”

The fifth essay in this thematic issue is, in some ways, a summation of the first four. Fred McGrail, vice president of communications at Lehigh University, writes a case study about the university and its signature role in the transformation of place—in this case the relationship of “Lehigh University and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Partnering to Transform a Steel Town Into a College Town.” The key features of the first four contributions all are in play in McGrail’s essay: the role of leadership, and the belief that engaged, place-based development takes time—time that needs to be filled with “partnerships” or collaborations with other community anchors or place-based actors. What sets this essay apart from the others is the description of a university, Lehigh University, that is actively engaged in a process of restructuring the *industrial* economy of its place, its community. Bethlehem, Pennsylvania is shifting away from its historical roots as a steel town. Today, the university is the central anchor of place and of economy. This is true “heavy lifting” for an institution—to shift its role as a non-market institution into a region-defining entity—for both the place and its market. The story McGrail tells is both summative and highly instructive.

The last two contributions to this thematic issue are also, in their own ways, both summative and instructive of new modes of assessing the role of the university as an “anchor” of a neighborhood, city, or region. No review of the university as an “urban anchor institution” would be complete without some attention to the shifting policy foci of the federal government and the increasing importance of universities as urban anchors in the devolutionary context of contemporary federalism. This topic is well addressed in the sixth essay in this thematic issue by the University of Michigan’s Elizabeth Hudson, titled “Educating for Community Change: Higher Education’s Proposed Role in Community Transformation Through the Federal Promise Neighborhood Policy.” In this piece, Hudson investigates a federal comprehensive community initiative, the Promise Neighborhood program, in order to understand higher education community engagement in an embedded context. The Promise Neighborhood program aims to improve youth opportunities using a model like the Harlem Children’s Zone. Through a qualitative analysis of the 21 nationwide Promise Neighborhood program awardee applications, Hudson discovered that higher education institutions commit to these partnerships through mission-related practices associated with teaching, research, and

service; capacity-building practices, including teacher training and community leadership development; programs and services, including direct community services; and administrative functions, such as grant management contributions. Hudson argues that starting to understand engagement from the perspective of community goals offers insight into the practices that compose what she calls “higher education’s civic mission.”

The concept of higher education has certainly morphed from the old and rather “unengaged” ivory tower notion to a new, highly engaged, place-based or community-based concept. This new concept embraces teaching tools like service-learning. The goals and strategies of service-learning have been evident in most universities for some time, and they have been key ingredients in a full range of disciplinary and professional training programs at liberal arts and community colleges for much longer. Using the dynamic features of John Dewey’s learning paradigms (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007), Kurt Lewin’s (1935) attention to social issues and problems, and Whitehead’s admonition about “inert” knowledge (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007), contributors Robert Kronick and Robert Cunningham write about the normative re-invigoration of the role they suggest that all institutions of the academy should take when engaging in “service-learning.” In this essay, they offer recommendations for both the academy and the community in an era when the notions of anchor institutions, civic engagement, and university-assisted schools all contribute to the process of making universities “solid citizens” (as the authors say) within their sphere of influence. To this end, the teaching and learning project of the academy (whether community college or research institution) reaches its zenith through engagement in solving social problems. In short, service-learning requires an active, if not always “activist,” institution of place.

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Making the Work of Anchor Institutions Stick: Building Coalitions and Collective Expertise

Nancy Cantor, Peter Englot, and Marilyn Higgins

Abstract

As more colleges and universities commit to a public mission, it is critical that our work as anchor institutions have a sustainable and positive impact, and that we collaborate fully with the diverse voices and expertise beyond our campuses—the most valuable assets of our multicultural cities. Taking Syracuse, New York, as a microcosm, the authors examine how Syracuse University physically and metaphorically has become an embedded and trusted anchor institution by building “civil infrastructure” to enable lasting “social infrastructure.” We joined with numerous partners in one of the city’s poorest but most promising neighborhoods to design “green homes,” repurpose old warehouses, and greatly expand educational opportunities for all children. As we did, art, technology, and literacy began to rewrite the story of the neighborhood. Scholars, students, and residents forged “communities of experts” to fulfill the central promise of an anchor institution: to make a sustainable difference in our community.

Introduction

It has taken time and the blundering wisdom and anarchic greed of our ancestry to construct the modern city of consolidated institutions. It is a great historically amassed communal creation. If you fly above it at night, it is a jeweled wonder of the universe, floating like a giant liner on the sea of darkness. It is smart, accomplished, sophisticated, and breathtakingly beautiful. And it glimmers and sparkles, as all things breakable glimmer and sparkle. (*Doctorow, 2000, p. 271*)

Macro Issues, Metro Areas

We live in a world that is relentlessly urbanizing. The United Nations (2010) reported that the proportion of the global population living in urban areas passed 50% in 2009. Indeed, the U.N. projects that these areas will continue to grow from within while they also siphon off rural inhabitants, accounting for all of the world’s population growth by 2050, when

it is projected that 69% of the world's 9.1 billion people will be urban dwellers. These trends are particularly acute in the United States, where more than 80% of the population lives in metropolitan areas, a proportion that the U.N. projects will reach 90% by mid-century. With this inexorable growth, the challenges facing our metropolitan (metro) areas surely will dominate our national and global agendas increasingly. Yet even now, many of our metros are broken, their luster dimmed by decades of disinvestment in their urban cores, deep-seated social divisions, and unsustainable suburban sprawl.

As the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program (2010) has documented, in the first decade of the 21st century, growth within U.S. metropolitan areas was three times greater at their fringes than at their urban cores. This pervasive pattern of suburban flight has been both a cause and an effect of economic stagnation, environmental degradation, deteriorating and under-resourced schools, and class and race divisions in American city centers. Many of these ills reflect misguided public policies aimed at decentralization that have abetted rather than assuaged decline at the core. As the sagacious, late scholar of urbanity, Jane Jacobs (1961), observed four decades ago:

in the schools of planning and architecture, and in Congress, state legislatures and city halls too, the Decentrists' ideas were gradually accepted as basic guides for dealing constructively with big cities. . . . This is the most amazing event in the whole sorry tale: that finally people who sincerely wanted to strengthen great cities should adopt recipes frankly devised for undermining their economies and killing them. (p. 21)

Not the least of the problems that have festered in the face of these policies and efforts at "renewal" is the cycle of despair among those who historically have not had a seat at the table when the fate of their own communities was being decided. Instead, urban renewal projects undertaken to revive cities over the past half century often had exactly the opposite effect, alienating masses of citizens in the process. It is a despair captured by Jacobs (1961) in the unvarnished assessment of an East Harlem resident, who voiced his community's palpable frustration:

Nobody cared about what we wanted when they built this place. They threw our houses down and pushed us

here and pushed our friends somewhere else. We don't have a place around here to get a cup of coffee or a newspaper even. . . . Nobody cared what we need. (p. 15)

Civic Agency: Moving Beyond a Cult of the Expert

Too often, universities contributed to exacerbating the troubles of our urban communities. For a long time, many urban universities managed to amass enough contiguous property to essentially co-exist side by side with, rather than connected to, those cores. Even with the best of intentions to engage, we often failed to recognize and cultivate the voices of the diverse talent who are among the most valuable assets of our urban cores.

Echoes of the voice of that East Harlem resident can still be heard loud and clear in cities across the United States, including Syracuse, New York, where Syracuse University dedicated the 2004–2005 academic year under the theme “University as Public Good: Exploring the Soul of Syracuse” (*Syracuse University, 2005*). Designed to leverage the change in institutional leadership that year to engage the university’s many stakeholders in dialogue, collaborative activities took place throughout that inaugural year aimed at envisioning the university’s course for the future, explicitly starting from the assumption that the university, even as a private institution, had a public mission, and that its map of academic excellence, from public affairs and public communications to information studies and architecture, among many other fields, drew sustenance from scholarly engagement in the world—and the world certainly included Syracuse University’s home region. In this way, the university entered in earnest a growing national movement among higher education institutions re-emphasizing their public mission that stretches back at least to the 1998–1999 national conferences that yielded the landmark Wingspread Declaration authored by Harry Boyte and Elizabeth Hollander (*Boyte & Hollander, 1999*).

To initiate dialogue aimed at leveraging the university’s strengths while breaking down the barriers between university and community, we invited all who considered themselves our stakeholders to share their thoughts on past successes and failures—faculty and staff members; students; alumni; friends of the university; and, crucially for the present context, members of the local and regional community. This listening exercise yielded expansive appreciations for the university’s achievements, but also expressions of profound disappointment that so many of our past engagements with the community had been one-off, short-term projects that also were primarily one-way in character. Like other

higher education institutions of the time, Syracuse University tended to define the problems to be addressed and pursue solutions without ascribing sufficient value to the knowledge and expertise of community members (Boyte, 2009; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; Thomas, 2011). Boyte characterizes this unidirectional approach as the “cult of the expert” and discusses productive alternative approaches by which academic researchers may engage their communities reciprocally. Nancy Thomas (2011) and Julie Ellison and Tim Eatman (2008) concentrate on the latter.

It is critical to understand this legacy, at Syracuse University and elsewhere. Universities are what Alice Rivlin and Carol O’Cleireacain (2001) termed “anchor institutions,” place-based organizations that persist in communities over generations, serving as social glue, economic engines, or both. An essential first step in making the work of universities as anchor institutions stick is creating a model of reciprocal, participatory engagement. As intellectual historian Scott Peters (*personal communication, September 7, 2011*) suggests, we require a far more collaborative model than the customary one—exactly opposite, in fact, to the slogan that Peters recently saw at an airport: “Community Problems, University Solutions.” When we work in communities, we must also work *with* communities, acknowledging that we are indeed part of the community, and that all involved share in the production of problems and in their solutions.

As the philosopher John Dewey (1916) points out, “From a social standpoint, dependence denotes a power rather than a weakness” (p. 44), and genuine independence from one another is “an illusion of being really able to stand and act alone—an unnamed form of insanity which is responsible for a large part of the remediable suffering of the world” (p. 44). Indeed, being embedded within the community, one part of a complex matrix of interdependence, is inherent in the notion of a place-based anchor institution. This concept should extend to how engaged scholarship is done as well.

Anchor Institutions: Merging Innovation and Full Participation

A starting place, therefore, for sustainable anchor institution work is to move beyond the one-way flow of intellectual capital (and technology transfer) independently generated within the ivory tower and given to (or perhaps foisted upon) communities. Instead, universities need to create “communities of experts” (Scobey, 2002), with coalitions from within and outside the academy that draw on diverse collective expertise to make a difference. If universities want to take on the economic, environmental,

educational, social, and health challenges of metropolitan America, and revive the nation's urban cores, they must merge *innovation* and *full participation* as linked means to a more prosperous and just end.

Our conversations among constituents on and off campus during “Exploring the Soul of Syracuse” clearly showed that Syracuse University’s expertise in art, architecture, and design, in inclusive urban education, in entrepreneurship, and in environmental sustainability, among other fields, was well suited to address the pressing issues of our city and its neighborhoods. However, we were not the only experts who needed to be at the table. Our city needed collaborative re-investment. As an anchor institution pursuing a vision emphasizing the need to partner with others outside academe to increase the impact of our scholarship on the pressing problems of the world—a vision we call “Scholarship in Action”—we needed to engage with communities of experts as complex as the challenges we face today. Therefore, along with our own experts from multiple disciplines, we have drawn in partners from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, including residents of the city’s vibrant but beleaguered neighborhoods. These engagements, although reciprocal by nature, are also strategic for the university, selected for their potential to advance priority areas of scholarly distinction while enabling the faculty to create learning environments on and off campus where students can experience the evolution and refinement of theory in practice by encountering the world’s challenges in all their messiness.

Community Assets, University Collaborations

Viewed this way, the prospect of engaged scholarship conducted with partners shines a different light on anchor institution work. Even the most challenged cities become places full of assets instead of perceived liabilities (*Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993*)—and this is all the more true for urban universities, which are situated amid diverse, multicultural populations and neighborhoods ready for re-investment, as demonstrated by the robust literature that has developed over the past 20 years focused on the wisdom and means of identifying and leveraging community assets in revitalization efforts. Indeed, Jacobs saw this even earlier (*1961*), arguing forcefully that the thriving diversity of spaces, places, institutions, and people—but especially people—already within cities generates and regenerates their vibrancy.

Does anyone suppose that, in real life, answers to any of the great questions that worry us today are going

to come out of homogeneous settlements? . . . lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves. (p. 448)

Building coalitions, mobilizing multidisciplinary and multi-sector talent, and empowering “home-grown” voices, provides a platform for attacking the key levers to prosperity: educational attainment, sustainable environments, and economic opportunity, as the national nonprofit CEOs for Cities (*Cortright, 2008*) suggests with its City Dividends formulation.

Urban universities are crucial institutional participants in, and promulgators of, this diversity. We are among the anchor institutions, including hospitals, nonprofit organizations, religious and cultural institutions, community-based organizations, and public agencies, that persist across generations as sources of stability as well as innovation, providing jobs, stimulating cultural life, and contributing new ideas that drive economic development. It is the interplay of strengths among anchor institutions in collaboration with the empowered voices of citizens and the availability of dense infrastructure that makes imaginative re-envisioning of the urban landscape possible.

Syracuse: A Rust Belt City Ready for Change

This readiness for collaborative action is evident in Syracuse. Although the city’s recent history has been much like that of many of the older industrial cities of the U.S. Great Lakes region and upper Midwest—the so-called Rust Belt—its assets containing the seeds of regeneration are, in fact, plentiful. The city has an abundance of natural resources, including parks, urban flora, and waterways—as well as access to plenty of potable water. Generations have taken care of many of the city’s architecturally distinguished buildings, which often enough continue to exist in districts rather than as stand-alone icons. Although the city’s place in the U.S. industrial landscape has faded from prominence, it strategically seeks to cultivate clusters of emerging industries that are growing and gaining momentum, especially those in the “green” and “clean” technology sectors, which place a high priority on products and processes that are environmentally sustainable. Significantly, the region has a distinguished history of social innovation stretching from its place as the seat of the pioneering democracy of the native Haudenosaunee Nations (commonly, and inaptly, known as the Iroquois Nations) to its role as a cradle of movements from abolitionism to women’s rights to disability rights. Awareness among the community of

this conspicuous historical thread of leadership in social progress is alive and growing, thanks in no small part to the city's long-standing and extensive network of cultural institutions. And despite decades of flight to the suburbs, the urban core of Syracuse has a truly resilient, diverse population of families, ranging from those that have been in the region for generations to those entering refugee resettlement programs, as well as an increasing number of new city-dwellers associated with a high concentration of educational institutions and medical centers—or “eds and meds”—that anchor growth in the region (*Bifulco & Rubenstein, 2011; CenterState CEO, 2011*).

The breadth and depth of these inherent assets are widely appreciated locally, and they have been affirmed periodically over the years as a foundation for regional economic development plans. In recent years, such planning initiatives have been informed by the work of the Brookings Institution (a nonprofit public policy organization) and CEOs for Cities, including a current planning initiative being completed by the state-appointed Central New York Regional Economic Development Council (the Council). The Council is striving to build upon the region's high concentration of eds and meds, high rankings as a place to raise a family (*CNNMoney.com, 2008; Forbes, 2010*), recognition for its “green” economy (*Svoboda, 2008*), and high concentration of green jobs in the metropolitan Syracuse area's urban core (*Muro, Rothwell, & Saha, 2011*). It is focusing on rethinking policies that promote harmful decentralization; repurposing existing urban infrastructure to position the core for renewed growth; and retraining the region's workforce, especially by expanding access to higher education. Pivotal to the latter effort is aiming for “full participation,” the notion that for a society to achieve its full potential, it must tap the potential of all of its people from all backgrounds and of all abilities.

In turn, Syracuse University's overarching strategy on a regional level is to catalyze the formation of reciprocal, multi-sector partnerships with other anchor institutions and with residents, bringing to bear its signature strengths in broad, multidisciplinary areas such as environmental sustainability, entrepreneurship, inclusive education reform, and art, technology, and design. Most important, we have in place a collaborative infrastructure in these key substantive areas, ranging from the New York State–designated Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems to an ambitious district-wide school improvement collaboration led by the Say Yes to Education Foundation (a nonprofit organization working to increase high school and college graduation rates). Broad and deep engagement with these existing networks

and partnerships makes it possible to collaborate in turning around the fortunes of distinct neighborhoods in Syracuse; this collaborative, embedded anchor institution work is described in the sections below.

First, however, it is important to note that for Syracuse University, as for many urban institutions, some critical preliminary work was necessary to pave the way and bridge the chasms of university and community, haves and have-nots in Syracuse. The university approaches this metaphorically and literally from University Hill, high above the city center. The campus is only a 15-minute walk from downtown, but a vestige of the early years of “urban renewal,” Interstate 81, effectively sections the university off from downtown, dividing neighborhoods and neighbors. To live up to our role as a collaborator, as an anchor institution ready to work with and in our community, we had to jump that highway, physically and psychologically.

Embedding an Anchor Institution in the Community

The landing point of that initial leap was a windowless, old furniture warehouse across town that had become a somber marker of disinvestment in downtown. Syracuse University renovated the building with a design by a distinguished alumnus of the School of Architecture, Richard Gluckman, that transformed the introverted hulk into an engaging landmark. Making it a part of the campus instantaneously brought hundreds of students and their faculty downtown day and night. This new academic hub—dubbed simply “The Warehouse”—has become a beautiful home for the university’s design programs, arts journalism, and the School of Architecture’s UPSTATE Center (an interdisciplinary center for design, research, and real estate), with ample additional space for community activities, an art gallery, and a café.

Before the Warehouse was completed, Syracuse University and the city also began collaborating with a wide range of community groups, state and federal agencies, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and arts organizations to create a Connective Corridor (the Corridor)—an arts and business district that runs in both directions from the campus hill area to the Warehouse, served by a newly created bus route. Still a work in progress, the Corridor links the university with theaters, museums, galleries, shops, restaurants, and parks. Following a path to several important downtown neighborhoods, it re-establishes its mile-and-a-half route as an inviting public space for interaction. Indeed, at the downtown end of the

Corridor sit both the Warehouse and one of Syracuse's most historic but, until recently, ignored neighborhoods, the Near Westside.

Looking Across “the Berlin Wall”; Building Coalitions to Stick

Looking out from the re-opened windows of the Warehouse at the Near Westside, it became obvious that there was both a need and an opportunity for comprehensive, organized, and consolidated collaborations and coalitions to bring Syracuse University's engagement to scale in a whole neighborhood. Across West Street, the broad arterial highway that runs beside the Warehouse, one could see an array of empty warehouses and ugly railroad bridges, a physical and social Berlin Wall. Indeed, it had been labeled as such by the residents of the Near Westside, the battered neighborhood of vacant lots, homes, and factories on the other side. It was a community with much potential, few supporters, and residents full of skepticism about the interests of outsiders in “fixing” the neighborhood. As long-time resident Carole Horan put it to a reporter: “Different groups have come and gone and I've been involved in them on different levels, but they never really stuck” (*Sykes, 2011, p. C1*). Making it stick on the Near Westside, however, is no small order.

The Near Westside neighborhood was once a hotbed of industrial innovation that gave the world the first air-cooled automobile engine (from the H.H. Franklin Manufacturing Company), multiple advancements in indoor climate control (from Carrier Corporation), some of the first “visible” print typewriters (from the L.C. Smith & Brothers Typewriter Company), specially hardened steel plows for farming (from the Syracuse Chilled Plow Company), and pioneering gears that drove productivity in the world's factories, homes, and streets (from the Brown-Lipe Gear Company). Indeed, Syracuse's Near Westside truly was a mecca for industrial ingenuity, drawing innovators such as Henry Ford to work through manufacturing challenges with experts in residence in this neighborhood (*Connors, 2009*).

But this thriving district of manufacturing, railway yards, and housing was hit hard during the city's long industrial decline after the Second World War (*Marc, 2010*). Today, the Near Westside includes the ninth-poorest census tract in the nation. Half of its 3,300 residents live below the poverty level, 40% are unemployed, and 17% consider themselves to have one or more disabilities. Home ownership there shrank to 15%. In 1998, it was devastated by

a *derecho*, a storm that might be described as a sideways tornado. It punched in the roof of the high school, tore the steeple off St. Lucy's Church at the heart of the community, and destroyed 80% of the neighborhood's trees, giant maples and oaks, which caused so much damage as they fell that many long-time residents said they never wanted to plant another tree.

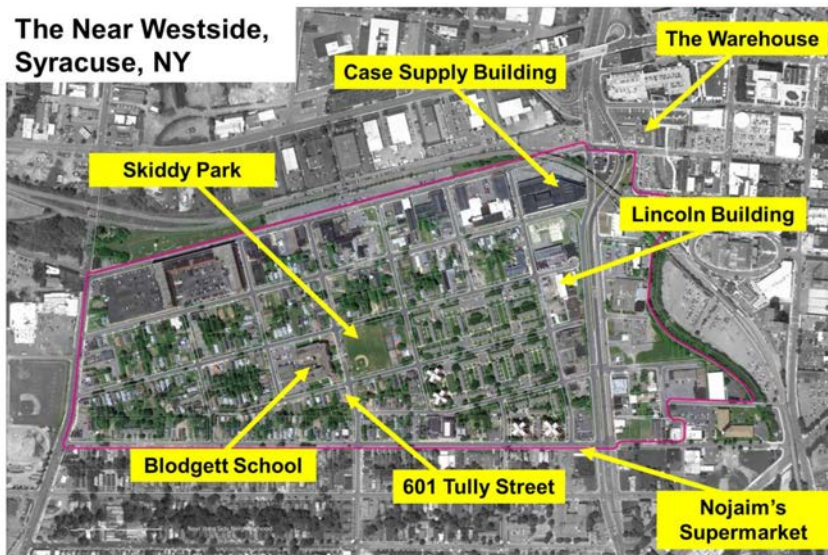


Figure 1. The Near Westside, Syracuse, NY

- Poorest neighborhood in Syracuse & ninth poorest in the country
- 3,310 residents: 31% White, 41% African American, 24% Hispanic
- 52% living in poverty (*double the city's rate*)
- 40% unemployment
- 37% with disabilities
- Violent crime rate 5 times the county rate
- 1,244 housing units, 20% vacancy rate (*double the state's rate*)
- Owner-occupancy rate of 15% within the 0.33 square mile area (215 acres)

Given Syracuse University's history of arms-length and uni-directional engagement with the community, it was far from a foregone conclusion that Near Westside residents would welcome university overtures to help tackle the neighborhood's many challenges. The road to building trust started one evening in 2006 in the rectory of St. Lucy's Church—home territory for community leaders—where the church's pastor, Father Jim Mathews, chaired an exploratory meeting with neighborhood residents that included leaders of area businesses and nonprofit organizations. The message from the community was unambiguous: "Here's what we don't

want to have happen to us again,” followed by a litany of things that had been done to the neighborhood rather than with the neighborhood over a number of years. They advised the well-intentioned coalition of outsiders that if they wanted buy-in from residents, they would need to start doing things that showed results and to start small. That was how the St. Lucy’s CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) basketball team got its first jerseys, courtesy of the Gifford Foundation, a local community nonprofit organization deeply engaged in the city and represented at that initial meeting.

Momentum built from there. Soon community members joined with the university, foundations, businesses, nonprofit organizations, the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County governments, and other institutions of higher education in 2006 to create a nonprofit organization—the Near Westside Initiative. This highly democratic body became the vehicle through which residents ranging from Father Jim to grandmothers with deep wisdom and memories of the past to the youth who ultimately will save this neighborhood came together to begin rebuilding and reclaiming its legacy. A pivotal goal has been to create “third spaces” of interaction, where established and often unequal relationships of power and expertise can be shifted to acknowledge what each member of the partnership brings to the table.

Instead of setting up a “command and control” model, the Near Westside Initiative adopted a collaborative model, asking participants to meet for consultation and discussion and move toward a common goal. This mode of operation is challenging and hard because it has not been done this way before—at least not in Syracuse, New York. The vision of turning the tables on power relations sometimes happens quite literally: It can lead to the president of the tenants’ association for the neighborhood’s public housing project arguing over lunch with the dean of Syracuse University’s School of Architecture, or a local Syracuse University trustee emeritus collaborating with a third-generation owner of a neighborhood grocery on building redevelopment. Talking across difference is what makes this partnership so powerful.

Collective Expertise in Action

That is no less true for Syracuse University faculty than it is for the Near Westside’s residents. Engineers such as Ed Bogucz, director of the university’s New York State Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems (SyracuseCoE), an experimental test-bed that Syracuse University built on an old brownfield

site reclaimed along the Connective Corridor, find that their research and teaching are informed invaluable through such table turning. Bogucz said he developed a passion for the Near Westside Initiative because the re-vitalization of the neighborhood—and others like it—is a “grand challenge.” He said

If you look at the sustainability of the neighborhood—its environmental sustainability, the economics, the social justice issues—I think it’s fair to say that this neighborhood and many other neighborhoods in cities across the country were essentially thrown away. And humanity simply can’t throw away neighborhoods and hope to survive on the planet. (*E. Bogucz, personal communication, 2010*)

Indeed, since the Near Westside Initiative’s founding in 2006, SyracuseCoE and Syracuse University’s School of Architecture have collaborated with numerous neighborhood residents, local industries, and partners from the public and nonprofit sectors to catalyze projects aiming not just for survival, but transformation. Listening has been a pivotal aspect of this collaboration, as exemplified by a locally focused studio course offered by architecture professor Julia Czerniak, in which students interviewed Near Westside residents as part of their research in creating design solutions for neighborhood sites; among the products of their research was a series of posters featuring residents with phrases that captured their thoughts about life in the neighborhood.

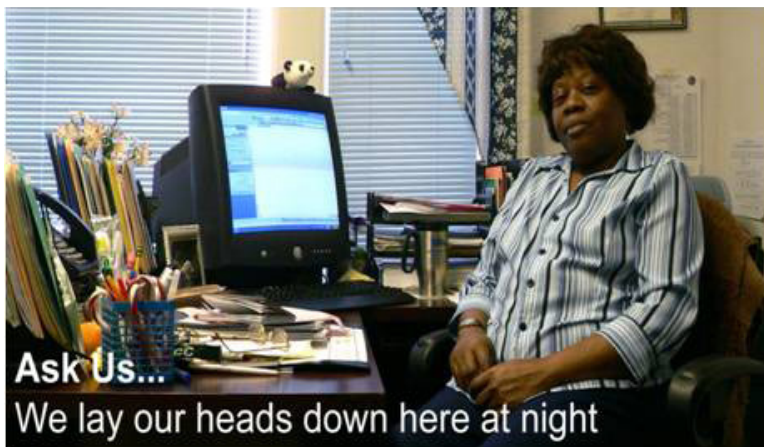


Figure 2. One of the posters produced by Syracuse University students enrolled in architecture professor Julia Czerniak’s locally focused studio course. Pictured is resident Mary Alice Smothers, who also directs the neighborhood office of local nonprofit People’s Equal Action and Community Effort (PEACE), Inc.

Coalitions such as these have, among many other projects, conducted 34 home energy audits to help residents identify energy-efficiency strategies for their homes and then find financing to implement them; built a green infrastructure residential demonstration site including porous pavement, rain barrels, a rain garden, and a green roof; and financed training, labor, and consulting for residential and commercial deconstruction projects.

At the epicenter of the Near Westside Initiative's plans for the neighborhood is the Syracuse Art, Literacy, and Technology (SALT) District. The acronym SALT recalls the city's origin as a regional center for the salt trade among Native Americans, as well as the Near Westside's earliest industry of salt harvesting by evaporation of brine from springs that dotted the area in the early days of the American republic. The Near Westside Initiative has been working in the SALT District to embed the arts, technology, and design with other fields (architecture, entrepreneurship, law, education, environmental engineering, public health, and public communication) as catalysts for innovation and transformation. This vision has helped the Near Westside Initiative generate more than \$70 million worth of public and private development in the neighborhood.

More than 60 artists already are living and working in loft spaces and studios in the neighborhood, and the Near Westside Initiative's residential housing efforts (e.g., construction, renovation, financing, home-buyer education), led by Home Headquarters (a local nonprofit organization that works to revitalize neighborhoods) have begun to undo the decades-long history of abandonment by landlords that left the neighborhood with 152 vacant parcels and 83 vacant structures. Since 2006, Home Headquarters has acquired 103 residential parcels within the target area, and is building new homes, rehabilitating others, and selling some derelict houses for \$1 to homeowners who commit to restore them. The Christopher Community (a nonprofit development company) and Habitat for Humanity (a nonprofit housing organization) are also deeply involved, having built 60 new affordable rental properties and 11 new homes, respectively, in the neighborhood. To avoid the damage that has been inflicted in some cities by gentrification, the Near Westside Initiative has deliberately sought to make it possible for current residents to stay in the neighborhood, where 85% are now renters. Of the new housing units built under the leadership of the Near Westside Initiative, 70% have gone to existing residents.

As time passed, the Near Westside Initiative's actively engaged board hired a director, Maarten Jacobs, to coordinate and oversee

its daily progress. A young, committed, and tireless master of social work graduate with a passion for public art, Jacobs led a project in 2010 with residents commissioning renowned graffiti artist Steve Powers to transform the dilapidated old Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western railroad trestles along the Berlin Wall into giant canvases. Powers came to Syracuse, spent many weeks speaking with Near Westside residents, then giving voice to their aspirations by painting the railway trestles in Technicolor, which lit up the neighborhood and turned foreboding barriers into inspirational gateways. He titled the six works on three trestles *A Love Letter to Syracuse*. Powers (2010) sees the works as drawing on the past and present to envision a way forward. For example, he says, “these painted bridges represent what I believe is the future of Syracuse; Taking what has value and remaking it for the future, in a way that respects tradition and innovation.” He goes on to say,

A Love Letter to Syracuse is meant to be from Syracuse to Syracuse. We found as we were painting it, it is also to industry, to the trains that pass over the bridges, to the act of painting hot steel in the summer, to collaboration, to polite drivers, and especially to improvisation (Powers, 2010).



Figure 3. One of the six murals painted on old train trestles in Syracuse's Near Westside neighborhood by celebrated graffiti artist Steve Powers that have turned perceived barriers into gateways.

Syracuse University students and faculty are partners, planners, activists, and designers in realizing that vision of the future. Marion Wilson, a sculptor and director of community initiatives in the visual arts in the School of Education, teaches an ongoing series of classes through which art, design, and architecture students have transformed 601 Tully Street in Syracuse, a former crack house situated at the heart of the neighborhood, across the street from an elementary school. That symbolic location is now a multi-purpose community incubator for the arts, humanities, and entrepreneurship, complete with its own coffee shop and a community garden.

House by house, trestle by trestle, the Near Westside Initiative's broad coalition of partners is making progress in addressing the neighborhood's challenges. That is the essence of the Near Westside Initiative's strategy for attacking the grand challenges that are the grim residue of decades of urban disinvestment: scaling down the perception of these challenges to their specific, local manifestations. Likewise, the solutions arising out of this work are ripe for scaling up. As Jane Jacobs (1961) suggests, urban regeneration is best cultivated block by block. If intensely local transformations can gather sufficient momentum to tip the scales back in favor of sensible and sustainable urbanization on the scale of a neighborhood, they can do so for an entire city.

In 2008, with these dynamics in mind, Syracuse University School of Architecture dean Mark Robbins and UPSTATE director Julia Czerniak, in partnership with the SyracuseCoE, conducted an international competition for cutting-edge, green, single-family homes to be designed and built on specific sites in the Near Westside neighborhood. Starting with the three prize-winners, this has yielded 11 green homes built in 4 years. One of them is so well insulated that it can be heated with the energy it takes to run a hair dryer—no small feat in a climate that brings Syracuse more than 120 inches of snowfall annually. One might wonder about neighbors' reception of this sudden sprinkling of architecturally world-class residential designs among the Near Westside's housing stock of predominantly modest 19th century styles. But neighborhood residents on the prize selection committee argued strenuously in favor of pushing the envelope on innovative design, presaging the appreciation that the finished homes enjoy and underlining the power of well-conceived architecture to inspire.



Figure 4. Renderings of the three winning designs from the international “From the Ground Up” competition conducted by Syracuse University’s UPSTATE:A Center for Design, Research, and Real Estate and the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems. From left to right they were designed by Cook+Fox and Terrapin Bright Green; Architectural Research Office and Della Valle Bernheimer; and Onion Flats.

In this way, the Near Westside and Syracuse are no different from challenged neighborhoods in cities of much larger scale. As *The New York Times*’ Michael Kimmelman (2011) observed in analyzing the impact of fresh, new architectural standards being employed in the renovation of the main public library in New York City’s neighborhood of Jamaica, Queens:

It’s a big change from decades ago, when city bureaucrats considered good design a costly frill. The quality of construction was allowed to suffer to serve the bottom line. This message of official indifference contributed to a climate of public skepticism about government and the city that, in turn, dimmed expectations for urban improvements, large or small. . . . It’s a reminder that humane cities don’t reserve quality architecture just for rich people, that small urban improvements help everyone because city neighborhoods are interdependent. (p. C3)

It is precisely this interdependence of neighborhoods that allows the transformation of the Near Westside, a relatively small area with only 3,300 residents, to send such a powerful message of rebirth across the City of Syracuse.

Three Dividends on the Near Westside of Syracuse

Scale and interdependence are also linchpin concepts for CEOs for Cities, which sees the accumulation of small improvements as the route to urban transformation. It has come as no surprise, then,

that as collaborative and deeply reciprocal projects have unfolded on Syracuse's Near Westside, the dividends CEOs for Cities forecast for investments in metropolitan cores—a green dividend, a talent dividend, and an opportunity dividend—all have begun to appear.

A Green Dividend

As the Brookings Institution detailed in a path-breaking study, the “green,” “clean,” or “low-carbon” economy offers more opportunities and better pay for low- and middle-skilled workers than the national economy as a whole. Defined as the economic sector that produces goods and services with an environmental benefit, it now employs 2.7 million workers—more than the fossil fuel industry—and 84% of these jobs are in major U.S. metropolitan areas, where three fourths of the nation's clean economy jobs were created between 2003 and 2010. Nationally, jobs in the clean economy are expanding at an annual rate of 3.4%, and the promise of renewable energy has ignited a “race to clean” in regions and cities across the United States and around the globe (*Muro et al., 2011, pp. 4, 24*).

In spite of being poor and obscure—and because its residents are eager for renewal—the Near Westside community has joined this “race to clean” in a way the Near Westside Initiative hopes can be a template for other urban partnerships, as it undertakes cutting-edge research, community and economic development, teaching, entrepreneurship, and workforce development. Central New York's five-county region ranks eighth among the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas in the concentration of private jobs in the clean economy (*Bogucz, Brown, & Kelleher, 2011*).

Just as its resident manufacturing ingenuity made the Near Westside an outsized presence during the U.S. industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, ingenuity in green infrastructure development is putting the neighborhood back on the map in the 21st century. For example, SyracuseCoE's Ed Bogucz and UPSTATE's Julia Czerniak spearheaded Syracuse University's efforts with a broad coalition of partners led by Raimi+Associates (an urban planning company) with Home Headquarters, the City of Syracuse, the Agora Group (an environmental services firm), Northeast Green Building Consulting, and Opticos Design (an urban design and architecture firm) that secured designation for the neighborhood as the nation's first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Neighborhood Development Project from the U.S. Green Building Council (a nonprofit trade organization). As such, it is committed to compact re-development, with green and mixed-use buildings, pedestrian-friendly streets, public

transportation, community policing, neighborhood shops and businesses, and a centralized school and park.

A Talent Dividend

Issues of sustainability play not just to physical development, but also to workforce development, another dividend cited by CEOs for Cities. With help from the Annie E. Casey Foundation (a nonprofit organization that fosters public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports to more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families), the Near Westside Initiative has trained 75 men and women in general construction and green infrastructure, and 85% of them now have full-time jobs, with plans to continue enrolling new residents annually.

An Opportunity Dividend

Creating wealth rooted in the community is a key to reaping the opportunity dividend. To this end, two resident-owned cooperatives are being launched with support from Syracuse University's Community Development Law Clinic: a high-tech hydroponic greenhouse, to grow and sell fresh vegetables, and a green property management company, to maintain the mixed-use properties owned and operated by the Near Westside Initiative, now nearly 300,000 square feet in all. Two of these properties were large, abandoned warehouses on West Street's Berlin Wall, which are being collaboratively redeveloped under the Near Westside Initiative's leadership. The 100-year-old Lincoln Supply Building has been given a completely green renovation and now houses two floors of apartments and two floors of office space. Significantly, it is the home for La Casita, a Latino cultural center created by Syracuse University faculty members in partnership with La Liga (the Spanish Action League of Onondaga County), and for the headquarters of Say Yes to Education Syracuse (the district-wide urban school reform collaboration). La Casita includes an art gallery, performance space, a bilingual library, a classroom, and a community kitchen (*Johnson, 2011*). Next door is a small building rehabilitated by the Near Westside Initiative as a home and studio for the well-known Puerto Rican artist Juan Cruz, who also teaches art there to children from the neighborhood.

Renovation of the second warehouse, Case Supply, will be nearly complete in 2013. Once the home of the Syracuse Chilled Plow Company, which supplied farming implements and machinery worldwide in the 19th century, it already houses the world's largest

literacy organization, ProLiteracy International, and soon will house WCNY, the region's public television affiliate—two organizations whose missions in communications and education speak directly to the 21st century challenge and promise of tapping the vast pool of talent in neighborhoods such as the Near Westside. Other businesses that have relocated to the neighborhood or started there since 2006 include an architecture firm, a recording studio, a coffee shop, a fitness center, and a bakery. To support continued development and growth of the 140 businesses already in the neighborhood, the Near Westside Initiative has helped organize a business association.



Figure 5. Photo portraits created by schoolchildren of Syracuse's Near Westside signal change in the making, covering one side of the long-vacant Case Supply Warehouse, which the nonprofit Near Westside Initiative is renovating to house regional public television station WCNY and ProLiteracy, the world's largest literacy organization, which is based in Syracuse.

The symbolic value of disassembling the warehouses of the “Berlin Wall” also must not be underestimated. To understand why, one need look no further than the Warehouse a few blocks away, where first-rate architectural design played a pivotal role in changing public attitudes about that little corner of the city and spurred economic development. The Lincoln Building, transformed by Brininstool, Kerwin and Lynch architects, and Case Supply, by King + King Architects with Koning Eizenberg Architecture, likewise are intended to leverage inspirational design to help spur neighborhood revitalization.

From Civil Infrastructure to Social Infrastructure

Perhaps design plays such an important role in communicating and cultivating expectations in a neighborhood like the Near Westside because it is a visible manifestation of commitment—whether by the public, private, or nonprofit sector, or some combination thereof—to the neighborhood’s future. Constructing or renovating a building is a highly visible—one might even say concrete—demonstration of willingness to invest in its location at that moment, but the permanence of buildings speaks to future intentions, as well. The commitment and intentions are amplified by the evident care invested additionally in thoughtful design.

The Warehouse, for example, with its academic programs and community reach, has been far more than an investment in the university’s infrastructure. It has leveraged the symbolism of “civil infrastructure” to generate “social infrastructure” between Syracuse University and the community. Thus, even though the Warehouse is owned by the university, it implicitly has become an integral part of the city’s civil *and* social infrastructure. It has reintroduced vibrant community space on a block where there was none, and by establishing a hub of activity in the city’s fabric where people can now be found any time of day, it has made that corner of downtown a place people want to be, bolstering the existing adjacent district of restaurants, shops, and loft apartments and spurring new development—including the attraction of downtown’s first new national retailer in 40 years and the relocation of New York State’s oldest architectural firm—King + King Architects—from the suburbs back to the Near Westside.

At the heart of Syracuse University’s work at the Warehouse, in the Connective Corridor, and along the Berlin Wall stands the ability, through imaginative, collaborative design, to re-orient structures as steadfast as roads and buildings to become collectively a stake in the ground for a long-term presence—an embedding of anchor institutions in the community—simultaneously inviting all kinds of dynamic partnerships to emerge. In our case, the leap across I-81 and the literal and metaphorical two-way street of the Corridor were prerequisites to establishing Syracuse University as a committed partner in reciprocal relationship to Syracuse’s future.

In addition to signaling Syracuse University’s long-term commitment, these “civil infrastructure” projects served as platforms to increase visibility of the numerous collaborative projects of the university’s artists, educators, designers, art historians, communications scholars, and more, multiplying the effects of their work.

When Syracuse University photographer Steve Mahan taught courses on literacy through photography, bringing together school-children (in classes that varied from elementary to high school) with Syracuse University students to tell their stories through photographs they take themselves, those compelling portraits lined the walls of the Warehouse, as did the posters created by Julia Czerniak's architecture students after interviews with Near Westside residents. Not only did these dramatic narratives give the university new eyes for its community, their exhibition in the Warehouse encouraged a feeling of joint ownership in that space, creating new social infrastructure.



Figure 6. Syracuse University photographer Steve Mahan bolsters literacy through photography, here training local high school students to use camera equipment in his classroom at the Warehouse in downtown Syracuse.

Similarly, when design faculty and students created the Urban Video Project to project video installations as public art on the sides of buildings, cultural institutions along the Connective Corridor, including the Everson Museum, the Syracuse Stage, and the Onondaga Historical Association, were obvious sites, and partnerships developed to curate the Urban Video Project as “community-owned.” The visibility of the work of the Community Folk Art Center, a collaboration of over 40 years between Syracuse University’s African American Studies faculty and African American residents of Syracuse, similarly increased with the façade re-design for buildings along the Corridor, as did the collaborative work between the university’s public memory scholars and one of

the oldest African American churches, Grace Episcopal, also on the Corridor. In that same vein, architecture students are working with local officials and businesses to adopt underutilized spaces along the Corridor—from rundown storefronts to vacant lots to parking garage façades, even parking spaces—as sites for experimenting with temporal, green designs such as “pop-up art galleries” and “flash parks” through a nascent business they call “The Front.” In each of these cases, the extraordinary human and cultural assets represented by the mingling of long-standing institutions and diverse community members, spotlighted in these relatively “new” or at least “newly imagined” spaces, did wonders for breaking barriers to full participation in the innovation that will re-envision the City of Syracuse.

Of Roots and Multipliers

The university’s physical infrastructure investments also have had a “multiplier effect” on the social infrastructure already rooted in the community. The Warehouse, for example, has become a hub not just for the university, but also for the community. It is the meeting site for more than 45 local organizations annually, including the Near Westside Initiative, the administration of which is based there. In a sense, the building is helping generate new “social glue” that is fusing the efforts of existing organizations—some long-standing—to strengthen the neighborhood.

In the absence of investment in the neighborhood in previous decades, residents and local groups built social support networks through grassroots organizations such as the People’s Equal Action and Community Effort (PEACE), Inc. and La Liga. Formed in Syracuse, PEACE, Inc. is a nonprofit, community-based organization dedicated to working with poor individuals and families across the life cycle. Since its founding in 1968, it has developed an extensive array of programs and services geared toward promoting self-sufficiency and delivered through offices across the city. Its Near Westside office is located in the heart of the neighborhood.

Similarly, in 1969, La Liga formed on the Near Westside as a nonprofit focused on the particular social, cultural, linguistic, economic, and educational barriers faced by the city’s Latino community. Over time, these two organizations grew to serve largely distinct clienteles. Now, the Near Westside Initiative has begun acting as a mechanism for collaboration between them, leveraging the strengths of each. The leaders of both organizations serve on the Near Westside Initiative’s board of directors, and the three organizations have become co-sponsors of the neighborhood’s single

largest social event of the year—the Westside Multicultural Block Party—along with La Casita and ProLiteracy. The 2012 block party was attended by more than 1,500 people, a number equal to about a third of the neighborhood’s population.

A new twist on the symbiosis of civil and social infrastructure is the Little Free Libraries Project. Inspired by a similar effort in Wisconsin that has grown into a national nonprofit organization, Little Free Libraries, Ltd., the Near Westside version was suggested by a local entrepreneur and is being spearheaded by a doctoral student in the Syracuse University School of Information Studies (iSchool) with its library science program. The Little Free Libraries are exactly what they sound like: tiny buildings dotting the urban landscape that house community-based lending libraries of books on specific themes of interest in their particular location, making books readily available to borrow for free at outposts across the community. A 20-member collaborative, cross-disciplinary team of librarians, designers, and Near Westside Initiative community group representatives and residents began meeting in fall 2011 to launch the project. At the first meeting, five tentative sites for the customized, weatherproof micro-structures were identified, and residents began the process of determining themes for the book repositories that all hope will promote literacy and social engagement among neighbors. Syracuse University design students began soliciting design requirements, and library science students began assembling lists of books for each little library, including bilingual materials, for the starter collections.

It Takes a Neighborhood

If there is an icon of the convergence of civil and social infrastructure, however, it is the neighborhood school. For neighborhoods across the country, the demands of the 21st century’s knowledge economy boil down to the grandest challenge of all: leveraging the talent dividend to transform urban schools from failure factories to intellectual elevators that enable full participation in the nation’s prosperity, particularly for groups that by and large historically have been left out of it.

The locus of this challenge on the Near Westside is Blodgett School, the neighborhood’s most grand structure, occupying its most prominent location, facing what is effectively the village green, Skiddy Park. The K-8 (kindergarten through 8th grade) building has become an icon of everything that is wrong with urban schools in the United States. Physically battered, the school became

notorious in Syracuse for youth violence and such poor academic performance that it was placed on state “watch” lists. Of course, the bulk of the failures correlate with the poverty-stricken condition of the neighborhood in the ninth-poorest census tract in the nation. The profound effects of that kind of poverty on educational attainment are well-documented, especially as they relate to the social mobility associated with college attendance. In the zip code encompassing the Near Westside, for example, only 12.7% of residents attained a bachelor’s degree, which is about half the national average (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2010*). Further, national data show that only 51% of students in households with incomes of \$25,000 or less were expected by their parents to finish college, compared to 83% of students in households with incomes of \$75,000 or more (*National Center for Education Statistics, 2008, p. 10*). That captures the circumstances in the Near Westside’s zip code, where the median household income is just more than \$22,000 (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2000*).

Challenges of this magnitude demand solutions to match, and today, Blodgett School is part of an urban school reform experiment on a scale not seen before—at least in this Rust Belt city. Syracuse University has joined, along with the Syracuse Teachers Association, the city, the county, and the American Institutes for Research, in a major city-wide collaboration led by the Say Yes to Education Foundation and the Syracuse City School District. Say Yes to Education Syracuse takes the foundation’s proven model of success in turning around the fortunes of individual schools in some of the nation’s most challenged urban districts—including Philadelphia and Hartford—and scales it up for the first time to the level of an entire school district.

With 21,000 students, Syracuse has a district whose scale is well-suited for modeling comprehensive change: large enough to be significant but not so large as to be unmanageable. It is by no means among the largest in the United States, but the challenges faced in this urban district are no less daunting than those of the largest cities. The city’s poverty rate of about a third is amplified among the district’s students, 84% of whom qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. That poverty is felt disproportionately by African Americans and Latinos, who constitute 65% of the district’s children (*Syracuse City School District, 2011*). When Say Yes to Education Syracuse started in 2008, less than 50% of the city’s kindergartners were graduating from high school 13 years later, and only 65% of ninth graders were finishing high school.

Say Yes to Education Syracuse provides a comprehensive system of academic, socio-emotional, health, and legal supports for

all Syracuse public school students and their families. Throughout, it seeks to build the culture of aspiring to attend college. A key element is eliminating the barrier of cost, so the program includes a Higher Education Compact guaranteeing that any qualified graduate of a Syracuse public high school can get the money to attend college. Two dozen private institutions, including Syracuse University and the entire SUNY (State University of New York) and CUNY (City University of New York) systems, participate in the compact. As of summer 2012, Say Yes to Education Syracuse has sent approximately 2,000 students to college.

Educating families about the educational process, including college prospects, also is essential. For this reason, Syracuse University has conducted a parents' university with workshops on topics such as how to talk with your child's teacher and how immigrant families can negotiate the culture of American schools. Syracuse University also conducted eighth grade "universities" to give middle school students a taste of college classes for a day and to familiarize their teachers with admissions requirements their students will need to know well in advance of applying to college. Syracuse University also is running an Early College High School that scaled up from 85 students in 2010 to 450 in 2012 (balanced on race/ethnicity, ESL [English as a Second Language], and inclusion) in one city high school, with support from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation (a nonprofit organization focused on education). This includes an integrated academic program that allows students to earn one to two years of transferable college credits to promote high school graduation and college completion.

Across the district, Say Yes to Education Syracuse is building both academic and social supports, including 355 trained tutors, about half of them Syracuse University students (and role models) paid with federal work-study funds. Each of the city's elementary schools has a Say Yes to Education Syracuse site director to help programs run smoothly during and after the school day, building the kind of support network and enrichment experiences that suburban families often take for granted. Working with community-based organizations, Say Yes to Education Syracuse runs free after-school programs for all of the city's elementary schools and a free summer camp for children 5 to 10 years old. In summer 2012, 2,000 city children attended the camp. The program has reduced significantly the caseload ratios for school social workers—from 1:550 to 1:200—and has changed their job descriptions to include flexible work hours and regular home visits.



Figure 7. A member of the Syracuse University student poetry group “Verbal Blend” leads a writing exercise in an after-school program under the auspices of Say Yes to Education Syracuse, a precedent-setting, district-wide urban school reform project collaboratively conducted by Syracuse University, the Syracuse City School District, and the Say Yes to Education Foundation.

In four schools and three community locations, Say Yes to Education Syracuse is operating free legal clinics where lawyers give families pro bono advice, service, and referrals in such areas as housing, immigration, and debtor rights. Collectively, Say Yes to Education Syracuse and community partners are working to ensure that children take advantage of available medical insurance programs, enrolling 90% of the students in 18 schools, and setting up physical and mental health clinics in 20 schools.

Early indicators of the impact of Say Yes to Education Syracuse are encouraging. Enrollment in the city schools increased for the first time in a decade—by 300 in fall 2011 (*Bifulco & Rubenstein, 2011*)—which indicates that parents are choosing to move or keep their children in city schools. Median home sale values increased by 3.5%, even with a persistently sluggish real estate market. And the dropout rate for 9th graders fell between 2009 and 2012.

Scaling Up and Moving Forward

It is at the micro level of the lived experience of community residents that the impact of a program like Say Yes to Education Syracuse is most palpable. Test scores rebounded. The way students are beginning to believe in the school—and themselves—again is

reminiscent of days remembered by Blodgett alumna Monica Johns (*Messenger*, 2011) in writing to support a renovation plan for the school:

In my day, it was a junior high school. That unique environment nurtured many of us and bridged a critical gap between elementary and senior high. I have fond memories of racing from art class to the fourth floor French lesson, and learning the algebra teacher's novel method for remembering the Pythagorean Theorem. I thrived in that environment.

That same inspirational love of learning is returning to the Near Westside in myriad ways, one of which is Learning Lots, a program funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. It leverages the social infrastructure of Say Yes to Education Syracuse, as well as the neighborhood's increasingly green civil infrastructure, to provide high school students with hands-on opportunities to pursue their passions and explore future careers in signature fields of the Near Westside Initiative. Ten students are working under the mentorship of professional artist-educators who are giving them space, quite literally, to hone their creative sensibilities. Last summer, they spent four days a week working in a newly renovated studio advancing their skills and presentation techniques while developing portfolios that will be essential elements in their applications to college art programs. Each student designed a public art installation to transform a vacant lot into an outdoor gallery, while also working collaboratively on a mural now installed in the neighborhood's Lipe Art Park. Another group of students worked side by side with adults enrolled in the local Green Train program and, together, they learned green infrastructure design, installation, and management skills by converting other vacant lots in the neighborhood into demonstration sites for sustainable residential neighborhood development. Hope is returning and expectations are rising as residents work together and with the Near Westside Initiative's array of partners to transform their neighborhood, lot by lot, block by block, and, most important, student by student.

At the same time, Syracuse University professors are seeing the diverse next generation grow up right before their eyes into aspiring professionals and academics. They are also experiencing transformation themselves as neighborhood engagement challenges them to see new intellectual connections, push the boundaries of their disciplinary knowledge, and hone their pedagogy, all of which

better enable them to educate active citizens and public scholars in ways that cultivate democratic values and interactions. As the social theorist and activist Harry Boyte (2011) observed, “We need scholarship which not only analyzes and criticizes but also stimulates conversations, expands the sense of the possible and activates civic energies.”

Conclusion: Anchor Institution Work that Sticks

Successful anchor institution work, as we believe is occurring in Syracuse’s Near Westside (and across the city and school district), does precisely what Boyte is calling for: It stimulates conversations among a wide-ranging and trusting community of experts, empowers local voices, and educates the diverse next generation of students—those who really will hold our future in their hands. In our case, to make our work really stick, we needed to start with the commitment, both symbolic and real, of civil infrastructure—downtown, off the campus’ hill—and move from there to the kinds of rich collaborative social infrastructure that can change the face and the fate of a long-abandoned neighborhood like the Near Westside. As Jane Jacobs knew so well, the magic of good architecture, especially (as we now know) when built to be “green,” quickly spreads and gives birth to innovations that are social as well as structural. Good ideas flow from all corners, and no individual person, organization, or sector owns the solutions, just as everyone “owns” having had a hand in creating the problems to be tackled. Doctorow (2000) had it right when he described the modern city as one of consolidated institutions, and anchor institutions are striving to restore the glimmer to cities and the hope to the next generation born in them. Collaborative work by universities and communities not only revives our cities, it reclaims the shared experience of civic agency so central to prosperous and just communities.

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From Gates to Engagement: A Ten-Year Retrospective of Widener University's Journey to Reclaim Its Soul and Fulfill Its Mission as a Leading Metropolitan University

James T. Harris, III and Marcine Pickron-Davis

Abstract

In this reflective essay, we describe Widener University's 10-year transformation from a disengaged institution to an institution that has a metropolitan-focused mission vested in civic leadership, community engagement, and service-learning. We describe our journey to embed an expansive civic frame that includes concrete practices of pedagogy, institutional engagement, and community partnerships. We discuss the rewards and challenges of engaging in long-term, democratic, collaborative work, offering a unique insight about the role of a private, mid-size university in anchor-based engagement. We conclude that Widener's strategy for achieving comprehensive community and economic development is responsible for sustaining multi-anchor regional and local partnerships.

Introduction

*I*n this reflective essay, we reflect on Widener University (Widener) as a metropolitan university and on our comprehensive strategy for engagement—public education, community engagement, economic development, and leadership—which adds value and contributes to our sustainable partnerships. Widener is an anchor institution situated in an urban community. Therefore, cultivating and sustaining reciprocal partnerships is a priority we strive to embed in the scholarly work of our service-learning faculty, in our senior leadership, and in faculty members' community-based teaching. Our university-community partnerships are dynamic and complex; here we offer examples of institutional practices and outreach efforts that helped Widener become mission-driven, enhanced democratic partnerships inside and outside the university, and strengthened the human, physical, economic, and organizational capacity of a distressed city.

The literature on anchor-based institutions has examined the contributions of public and research-intensive universities; however, we offer a unique perspective showing the role a private,

mid-size, doctorate-granting university can play in a distressed and underserved community. This reflective essay examines the innovative ways Widener has assumed its role as an “agent of democracy” through partnerships in the regional community with parents, stakeholders (e.g., Salvation Army, United Way, Chester Boys and Girls Club), other anchor institutions, agencies, K–12 schools, and the local government since 2002 (*Sirianni & Friedland, 2005, p. 58*). We also deconstruct the three general roles or patterns—facilitator, leader, and convener—that evolve from anchor-based engagement and a metropolitan-focused mission, which were cited in a case study of 10 anchor institutions (*Axelroth & Dubb, 2010*).

A Citadel Mentality

In summer 2002, when I, James T. Harris, III, began my duties as the new president of Widener University, I was astonished by the attitude of the university regarding the City of Chester, the community where Widener’s main campus resides. During my first week on the job, two encounters with senior administrators at the university convinced me that Widener University not only needed to develop a better relationship with the local community, but also needed to rethink its mission, vision, and values.

On my first day, I was invited to a meeting with senior university administrators to discuss the feasibility of creating a gated community around the freshman quad with fencing and a single entrance to give the impression that Widener was a safe place for resident students. During the meeting, I was shown an architectural rendering of the fencing and gate. It was explained to me that although the university had a strong safety record, it was felt that the City of Chester had such a bad reputation for crime that Widener needed to make it appear it was taking action. At the end of the meeting, I tried to explain my position, which was that the university should not be using its resources to become a citadel from the local community and that we should seek ways to engage more fully the City of Chester. In response to that remark, one of the vice presidents replied, “Chester is a place that will suck Widener dry and is not worth wasting the university’s precious resources on.”

At the end of my first week, I was asked to visit a local newspaper office to meet the editor and publisher of the paper. I agreed to the meeting through our public relations office. When the day of the interview arrived, I was informed that a campus safety officer would drive me to the newspaper office and escort me into the building. When I mentioned that the newspaper building was less

than five blocks from my office and I could easily handle my own transportation, one senior administrator told me that she could not be held responsible for anything that happened to me that morning. I drove myself to the meeting and returned safely back to my office wondering what had happened to create such a hostile reaction to Chester among certain members of the university community.

Widener History

Widener University was founded in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1821. Originally named the Bullock School, it would later move to Chester, Pennsylvania, and become known as Pennsylvania Military College. In 1972, when the corps of cadets was retired, the school was renamed for a long-serving board member and became known as Widener College. In 1979 it earned university status, and by 2002 it had developed into an independent, multi-campus, doctorate-granting institution with three campuses serving approximately 6,500 students in two states.

The main campus in Chester had always attracted most of its student population from the greater Philadelphia metropolitan region. The undergraduate full-time students were, and continue to be, predominantly majority students, mainly from middle-class families. However, in recent years the university has changed its profile. Today, 26% of Widener undergraduates are considered minority students, and approximately 40% are Pell Grant eligible.

Over the years, Widener's predecessor institution, Pennsylvania Military College, was viewed as an important, if not particularly active, organization in the community. As a military college, it confined its involvement in the community to special events, such as when cadets would march through town to participate in a holiday parade or some local celebration. During the tumultuous times of the 1960s in Chester, crime rates grew and the tax base narrowed as the middle class migrated to the suburbs. Pennsylvania Military College was caught in a difficult situation. As a struggling institution with limited funding and no endowment, Pennsylvania Military College and then Widener needed to be careful how it invested its resources. As things began to deteriorate in Chester and concern over violence in the city grew, the university developed a citadel mentality, closing itself off from the troubles that lurked beyond its campus boundary.

Increasing violence in the city and a decline in quality of the public schools led to an exodus of the middle-class population. Faced with enormous problems, the city raised property taxes,

which caused more citizens to leave, exacerbating the situation. As part of that migration, more and more Widener faculty and staff members were choosing to live outside the city, driving an additional wedge between the university and the community. During Chester's more prosperous days, the majority of Pennsylvania Military College employees lived in the city; however, by 2002, less than 5% of Widener employees lived in the city limits. These factors, as well as other decisions made by the university, such as discouraging Widener faculty and students from volunteering in the public schools or crossing Interstate 95, which provided a buffer to the downtown, led local citizens to view Widener as an institution that was unconcerned about the issues facing the city. When I asked the mayor in 2002 how Chester citizens viewed the university, he stated: "Widener is viewed by most citizens as a dragon that eats up land that otherwise would be generating tax dollars for the city."

By the turn of the 21st century, Widener was viewed as neither engaged nor concerned with the problems facing Chester and had no plan in place to strategically engage the local community, with a few exceptions. Widener had created a partnership with the Crozer-Chester Medical Center to create a nonprofit corporation designed to attract high technology firms to the neighborhood between the two anchor institutions. Unfortunately, within a few years, that project failed.

In 2000, the Widener Center for Social Work Education partnered with the Chester Education Foundation to establish the Social Work Consultation Services. The Social Work Consultation Services articulated a dual mission: to improve the lives of low-income citizens in Chester, and to train competent and caring social work leaders (*Poulin, Silver, & Kauffman, 2007*). This new entity was well-received in the community, but the university administration did not support its creation, leaving the faculty to their own devices to raise money for the project.

By 2002, Widener was viewed as a university located in a bad neighborhood within one of the nation's most distressed cities, and Widener had no strategy in place for systematically addressing the significant issues facing Chester or engaging the community in any meaningful way to form democratic partnerships.

City of Chester

The City of Chester is located southwest of Philadelphia in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. It has a proud history dating back

to 1682, when William Penn renamed the small Swedish settlement in the new world “Chester.” Chester played a prominent role in the early colonies, and by the 20th century it had emerged as one of the nation’s leading industrial cities.

By the 1950s, the city’s population had swelled to 66,000, mostly due to the significant manufacturing that prospered in the area in the middle of the 20th century. During this time Martin Luther King, Jr. attended Crozer Theological Seminary, earning his degree in divinity and serving as an associate pastor in a local church. By the end of the first half of the century, Chester proudly proclaimed its slogan: “What Chester makes, makes Chester.”

However, over the next five decades, the city experienced significant economic difficulties as manufacturing and other industries moved away. By the time of the new millennium, the city faced the challenges of an urban environment in decline. As of 2010, the city population had dropped to 35,000, with 32.3% of all individuals categorized as living in poverty and 46.8% of the adults listed as outside the labor force (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2010*). From 2007-2011, the median family income in Chester was \$27,661, representing the lowest in the five-county area, including Philadelphia, and less than half that (\$63,677) of Delaware County (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2010*).

As problematic as economic growth and community development were in the City of Chester, the challenges facing the public schools were equally daunting. The Chester-Upland School District became one of the most troubled school districts in the nation. Out of 501 school districts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Chester-Upland School District has been ranked at or near the bottom for more than three decades. The ability of Widener or any other university to work with the school district in meaningful ways over the years was always compromised by the lack of consistency in district leadership. For example, from 2000 to 2010, at least eight different people served as superintendent.

Creating a Shared Vision for the Future

The educational philosopher John Dewey promoted the idea that theory and practice were not merely compatible, but that combining them was highly desirable, and that the greater aims of society could be accomplished only through participatory democracy. He emphasized that the major advancements in knowledge occurred primarily when the focus was on solving significant societal issues. These advancements most often occurred, according to

Dewey, when the learning in the classroom was continuous with the learning outside the school in the real world (*Dewey, 1916*).

Unfortunately, the real world both inside Widener and outside in Chester was in Dewey's time, and remains to this day complicated, unpredictable, and difficult to control. The past was filled with politics, corruption, shifting economic realities, and changing societal mores, all of which influenced how Widener interacted with or related to the Chester community. Developing democratic partnerships (as suggested by Dewey) with constituents outside Widener to advance knowledge and enhance student learning would be mutually beneficial to everyone involved. Forming such partnerships would prove to be challenging but was paramount if the university was to thrive in the 21st century.

Equally challenging was developing democratic partnerships within a university culture that was unaccustomed to strategic planning and meaningful dialogues about future directions, especially regarding greater interaction with the local community. Widener needed to rethink its relationship with Chester and develop a purposeful vision that would direct our work as a university.

For years, Widener functioned on an annual operating plan that drove the budgeting process. According to the records, by 2002 Widener had never engaged in a sustainable strategic planning process, and there were no long-term university plans in place. The mission statement was common and uninspiring. It essentially gave the university wide latitude to meet the demands of the marketplace and in no way included a focus on working in collaboration with the communities the university served.

In fall 2002, Widener established a university strategic planning committee made up mostly of faculty members who represented the myriad constituencies at the university. Prior to the kickoff of the planning work, I had met one-on-one with more than 100 trustees and faculty and staff members, as well as dozens of community and alumni leaders. In each meeting with internal constituents, I asked who they thought should serve on a strategic planning committee to direct the future of the university. Based on that feedback, 12 people were asked to serve. During those meetings, a clear consensus regarding the future developed. Although every person had his or her own ideas about the direction the university should take, almost everyone believed that Widener needed to engage the Chester community in a more meaningful and sustainable way. One thing was crystal clear from the early discussions: Widener needed to rethink its core mission.

The process of affirming or expanding an institutional mission should never be taken lightly, and, in the higher education tradition of democratic participation in decision making, changes in mission require input from all of the affected stakeholders. Many colleges and universities have successfully navigated these conversations by developing a discernment process in which representatives from various stakeholder groups are brought together to discuss and reflect on the mission of the institution and its relevance moving forward.

An example of including key stakeholders in a discussion about an institution's mission occurred at Widener in fall 2003. Widener held a "visioning" summit on its main campus and included board members, faculty members, administrators, students, community members, alumni, benefactors, and local elected officials to discuss what should be included in the university's mission and vision statements (Harris, 2011). The summit was one component of a 2-year process to incorporate feedback from key constituents regarding the core values of the university into a long-term plan that would chart the university's direction for the next decade.

The Strategic Planning Committee took the feedback from the summit and decided to create a dynamic new vision for Widener, starting with a new mission statement. The mission statement was written by a small group of faculty leaders, trustees (skillfully led by former chairman David Oskin), and key senior staff members. The mission, adopted by the Board of Trustees in December 2003, boldly stated that Widener would create "a learning environment where curricula are connected to societal issues through civic engagement," and would "contribute to the vitality and well-being of the communities we serve." The strategic plan had several goals, including one specifically stating that the university should address the metropolitan region's most pressing problems. The mission, strategic goals, and vision statement, titled *Vision 2015*, were approved by the board at its May 2004 meeting (Widener University Strategic Plan, 2004).

When the planning process was completed, more than 1,200 people had participated, representing all university constituent groups and including several local citizens. Dozens of meetings had taken place with elected officials, business leaders, clergy, community activists, members of the Chester-Upland School Board, and local neighbors. What is most interesting is that prior to this effort, the majority of the faculty had not been asked to participate in planning efforts or to offer opinions regarding the direction of the university. When we made efforts to engage a broader group

of faculty in part of the planning process, there was significant resistance from the faculty members elected to establish governance committees, primarily because they felt their authority was being undermined. In addition, some faculty members considered planning sessions that fully involved community members to be inappropriate and unnecessary.

The university planning process has evolved and now includes an annual planning day meeting at which faculty members elected to standing faculty committees are invited to an all-day budgeting workshop to decide which priorities identified in the strategic plan should be funded. The Board of Trustees also participates in its own assessment of the progress made on the plan at its annual fall retreat and receives strategic plan updates at every board meeting. Local community members provide input about the university's direction at least twice a year through a community advisory board that meets directly with me.

As part of the final planning document, the mission statement proclaims that Widener is a "leading metropolitan university" (*Widener University Strategic Plan, 2004*). It is important to note that its designation as a "metropolitan university" was a bold new direction for Widener. Most people had not heard of the term, and some saw it as possibly limiting the scope of the university's potential. However, most saw the potential for the university to make its mark nationally by focusing locally on important issues. Likewise, as the national higher education dialogue started focusing on "anchor institutions," it was easy for the Widener community to understand and adopt this new nomenclature. Over the past decade, the strategic plan's focus on the metropolitan region could be summarized as concerning three critical areas: community development, economic development, and public schools.

Everyone that participated in the planning process shared a common belief that Widener had the potential to achieve new levels of distinction academically, but it is important to note that, at the time of the initial plan, the prevailing attitude about the university among most Chester community leaders and many within the Widener academic community was skepticism. Most were skeptical that Widener had the ability to lead or even participate in a meaningful way in a renaissance in Chester, as well as the fortitude to take on some of the toughest issues, especially those dealing with the public schools, violence, and poverty.

The University as a Facilitator, Leader, and Convener

During the past few decades, many institutions across the country have become increasingly involved in local community issues that could broadly be placed in three categories: economic development, community development, and public education initiatives. Economic development generally refers to the work of universities in partnering with local municipalities, businesses, financial institutions, and federal and state agencies to encourage and promote the economic well-being of a region or city. These efforts may take many forms, including workforce development, purchasing, capital investments, neighborhood revitalization, technology transfer, and the creation of business incubators to encourage and support entrepreneurial ventures.

Community development typically refers to the efforts of a university to work with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as other community-based organizations, to address community problems that affect the living conditions (e.g., housing, violence, unemployment) of the community where the anchor is located. Likewise, public education initiatives often focus on how a university can partner with the local public school district(s) and other organizations to improve the quality of and access to education from kindergarten through high school (K–12). The ultimate aim of this work is to improve student learning outcomes in K–12 education, and to increase the percentage of students from underrepresented groups prepared for college-level study.

To help articulate the commitment to advancing these three broad issues as part of the mission of a university, the idea of being categorized as “metropolitan,” or “anchored” to a particular location, has gained momentum, especially among urban institutions. According to a recent report on university engagement published by the Democracy Collaborative, anchor institutions that wish to better the long-term viability of the communities where they reside can play many roles, but their work typically falls into three patterns: that of facilitator, leader, or convener (*Axelroth & Dubb, 2010*).

When a university acts as a facilitator, the institution works with local community organizations by connecting faculty members and students through academic service-learning opportunities and by facilitating conversations between various organizations, including the university, to build capacity to address societal issues (*Axelroth & Dubb, 2010*). Usually these institutions have supportive administrative and academic leadership but limited resources to

contribute as major investors in significant community development projects.

According to the Democracy Collaborative, a university is considered a leader when it attempts to address a specific societal issue, such as crime or failing schools, by taking a leadership role in the discussions and by making a significant financial commitment to the efforts (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010). In this situation, the university administration may take an active and visible role in addressing a particular issue, and use the university's influence to attract additional partners and resources.

A university is considered a convener when it builds alliances with local organizations, government agencies, or other partners to set an agenda focused on a long-term strategy to improve the living conditions in particular neighborhoods, establish community health goals, or encourage economic development (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010). In this scenario, the university views its role as a co-partner; it may invest its own resources to advance the initiative, but usually does so only if others are willing to work with the institution to solve the particular issue. Typically, universities who are conveners view their role in the community as part of the institution's mission, and they expect to play a major role in the agenda-setting of the local community.

Building Capacity: Widener as a “Facilitator”

Universities as facilitators focus their efforts on building capacity for community organizations and residents. By partnering with city and community organizations, these institutions are able to facilitate broader, collaborative efforts for community development. (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010, p. 7)

As is true for the other institutions highlighted in this issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, community engagement is an institutional priority of the president (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010). I established the Office for Community Engagement and Diversity Initiatives after my first year at Widener to reinforce my commitment to breaking down a fortress mentality and to signal the importance of community partnerships to my administration (Wilhite & Silver, 2004). Reporting directly to me, this office functions as a “facilitator” and assumes leadership to foster university and community partnerships with schools, business and civic leaders, and faith-based organizations; collaborates

with and supports faculty members engaged in service-learning and community-based research; broadens staff volunteerism in the community; and assists in the development of short- and long-term strategies that address the social, economic, and educational needs of the local community.

In 2005, a Civic Engagement Committee was created as a standing committee of the Widener University Board of Trustees. The Office for Community Engagement and Diversity Initiatives serves as the liaison to this committee, and is charged with the responsibility to promote and institutionalize a comprehensive engagement and outreach strategy across the university's four campuses. Chaired by Ira Harkavy, a Widener trustee and the director of the University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships, the committee serves as a catalyst to align Widener's institutional priorities to ensure sustainability of engagement. The committee functions in a consultative role, supporting the development of Widener's commitment to civic engagement—its practices and internal projects—toward the advancement of an anchor institution agenda.

In addition, Widener institutionalized an engagement agenda through the establishment of the President's Community Advisory Board, which comprises members of community organizations, public and private civic and faith-based groups, and governmental and business organizations. Functioning as a "think tank," the advisory board meets regularly with the president and university faculty and staff to discuss a broader community and economic development agenda, address concerns, and think strategically about building on the assets of the local neighborhoods.

Another example of Widener as a facilitator is the university's Academic Service-Learning Faculty Development Program, which underscores Widener's commitment to civic engagement and community-based learning. Since the program's inception in fall 2004, more than 50 service-learning faculty fellows have developed courses that employ service-learning, demonstrating the goal represented in Widener's strategic plan of embedding civic engagement as part of the undergraduate and graduate experience.

The Academic Service-Learning Faculty Development Program is intended to provide faculty members with resources and experiences that will enable them to do one of the following: convert a traditional course to an academic service-learning course, modify and enrich a course that is already being offered with an academic service-learning component, or develop a new

course employing an academic service-learning methodology. Faculty members from the Schools of Human Service Professions, Arts and Sciences, Business, Engineering, Hospitality Management, and Nursing have participated in the program. More than 80 different service-learning courses are taught at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Students fulfill approximately 15–20 hours of community service in each course. Most notably, more than 1,700 students have completed a service-learning course, and more than 50 community partners have worked with Widener students to provide rich, hands-on experiences. Almost half of the faculty fellows teach courses that link students with after-school programs and local schools to offer academic support to K–12 children. Faculty members who have completed the program continue to teach courses with a service-learning component, have had articles about their courses published or accepted for publication, and have presented at local, statewide, and national conferences.

Community Development Partnerships: Widener as “Leader”

Universities as leaders focus on the improvement of conditions in their immediate, challenged neighborhood with a significant investment of resources, engage in dialogue with the community, and set the community revitalization agenda with a focus on public health, K–12 education, and community development. (*Axelroth & Dubb, 2010, p. 9*)

Widener University has demonstrated leadership in leveraging institutional resources to contribute to the health and vitality of the City of Chester, with particular emphasis on community development. In 2000, the Social Work Counseling Services initiative was created to address the gap in the human service needs of residents in Chester. Social Work Counseling Services was developed collaboratively by the Center for Social Work Education and a local community partner, the Chester Education Foundation, to provide social work services to local grassroots organizations. The concept of a university-sponsored field internship emerged out of faculty interest in serving the local community, integrating the social work model of professional skills training through field internships with civic engagement models of service-learning as well as engaging the human capital of students in supporting revitalization efforts (*Poulin, Silver, & Kauffman, 2007*).

Currently, Social Work Counseling Services fulfills a dual mission of maximizing student learning opportunities and expanding the capacity of the human service infrastructure within the community. Social Work Counseling Services provides free direct social work services to local residents and free or low-cost capacity-building services to community-based human service and educational organizations, including the Widener Partnership Charter School. Clients are seen on site at partner agencies, in their homes, or in Chester community hospital program offices. Social Work Counseling Services also offers online counseling services for residents with mobility challenges. Teams of Social Work Counseling Services staff, students, interns, and Widener faculty fulfill a variety of social and behavioral health service gaps in Chester and provide more than 1,000 counseling hours to clients annually. Pro bono services include individual and family counseling, sexuality and trauma counseling, job readiness counseling, and individual counseling to women on welfare to help them become gainfully employed. Social Work Counseling Services also offers research and evaluation, staff development and training, and program development and planning services to local under-resourced organizations (*Widener University President's Honor Roll Application, 2010*).

Widener's Institute for Physical Therapy Education opened the Chester Community Physical Therapy Clinic (the Clinic) in fall 2009 primarily to provide the Chester community with physical therapy services and health and wellness education to address the health disparities of its residents. The clinic serves patients who are denied care from local physical therapy clinics due to their uninsured status or exhausted insurance benefits. The Clinic partners with community health clinics and local physical therapy practices to complement, not compete with, existing physical therapy services in Chester, and to identify clients who may benefit from the Clinic's services. The Clinic provides valuable health care services to underserved residents and fosters students who are able to apply their academic knowledge firsthand and who possess the strong character necessary to serve as leaders within their field. Furthermore, based on a new vision of clinic management with student leaders at the helm, the Chester Community Physical Therapy Clinic is a student-run clinic. Pennsylvania-licensed alumni physical therapists supervise students' on-site clinical care services (*Widener University President's Honor Roll Application, 2010*).

The Widener University School of Law provides opportunities for students to be exposed to the Public Interest Resource Center

on the Wilmington, Delaware, campus and to the Public Interest Initiative on the Harrisburg campus. Backed by its dedication to public service, Widener Law School's outstanding trial advocacy curriculum provides an effective training center for aspiring prosecutors, public defenders, and government attorneys. Through the Public Interest Resource Center, students are connected to public service opportunities, which are unpaid volunteer internships. In Harrisburg, Widener's School of Law offers students the rich rewards of being in the capital of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The students are introduced to state government, and have the chance to participate hands-on through the law and government program.

As the only law school in Delaware, Widener's School of Law on the Wilmington campus offers opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience working with Delaware's judiciary and legislature. Students volunteer with prosecutors and public defenders, legal aid offices, and other nonprofit and government agencies. Notably, the Wilmington campus offers these opportunities throughout the metropolitan region. Each year, law school students volunteer almost 50,000 community service hours in Widener's legal clinics, which include the Delaware Civil Law Clinic, Pennsylvania Civil Law Clinic, Harrisburg Civil Law Clinic, Environmental Law and Natural Resources Clinic, Pennsylvania Criminal Defense Law Clinic, and the Veterans Law Clinic.

Public Education Partnerships:Widener as “Convener”

Universities as conveners have the opportunity to make strategic choices to engage in neighborhood revitalization while leveraging external resources towards economic development and capacity-building of particularly challenged neighborhoods. (*Axelroth & Dubb, 2010, p. 10*)

Of all of Chester's social and economic challenges, education persists as the most acute; the need for creative, collaborative action was clear. Chester had and continues to have one of the highest dropout rates and the highest percentage of adults 25 years and older without a high school degree in the state, as well as low numbers of college-bound students. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, only 63% of students in the Chester-Upland School District graduated from high school in 2009–2010, compared to 90% in the state.

Over the past decade, Widener has fostered a strong commitment to university-school partnerships. As one of our most successful areas of engagement, our public education partnerships exist on a continuum of engagement, including tutoring and mentoring, service-learning, teacher education field experiences, academic enrichment, college-preparation programs, and teacher professional development. Widener provides these substantial resources to the entire school district in the community, which comprises six kindergarten through eighth grade schools and three high schools.

Following the adoption of the university's new civic mission, Widener's role as "convener" emerged to respond to the pressing needs of a district identified as the worst-performing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Of the 501 school districts in the state, the Chester-Upland School District ranks 500 in student achievement. The university lacked the political support and financial strength to contribute to a comprehensive district-wide reform strategy, but strong senior administrative leadership led to the creation of a university-sponsored charter school. This community development initiative aligns with Widener's mission of promoting access and high academic achievement.

To provide a desperately needed educational alternative for children, the university partnered with families and residents in fall 2006 to launch the Widener Partnership Charter School—the first university-sponsored charter school in Pennsylvania. As the "convener," Widener viewed parents and caregivers as co-participants in pledging their support for the mission and vision of the charter school. Moreover, this collaboration involves joint goals and reliance on each other to accomplish them (*Kezar, 2007*). According to Axelroth and Dubb (*2010*), sustainable campus-community partnerships involve inclusive planning processes that embed transparency. The School of Human Service Professions coordinated strategic outreach with local organizations, parents, caregivers, and residents through town meetings, focus groups, and other activities to ensure that information regarding the school's programs, admissions policies, and curricula were widely disseminated to elicit feedback from all local community constituents.

This kindergarten through fifth grade charter school serves 300 students and their families who are drawn from the population of the Chester-Upland School District, which characterizes many of the problems endemic in urban education, such as school dropout rates above state averages, low percentages of college-bound students, and some of the lowest standardized test scores in the state.

One of the distinguishing features of the school is its focus on partnering with parents. The school engages parents and caregivers as partners in its holistic approach, providing a forum for family participation in its operation. Interdisciplinary teams of Widener faculty members and graduate students in education, social work, clinical psychology, physical therapy, and nursing work with the children and their families on an ongoing basis to promote social, emotional, and intellectual development. In addition, Widener education faculty members and undergraduate and graduate students work with the principal and teachers to plan and implement a holistic, rigorous, standards-based curriculum that includes art, music, and foreign language. The Widener Partnership Charter School provides multiple opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, including field experiences, service-learning, clinical internships, and student-teacher placements.

Statewide assessment test results each year demonstrate the success of the Widener Partnership Charter School in meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP). In 2009, 76% of its third graders scored at proficient or advanced levels in reading, and 70% of Widener Partnership Charter School students scored at proficient or advanced levels in math. By comparison, the average for third-fifth grades in the Chester-Upland School District was 46% for reading and 54% for math at the same levels.

The Widener Partnership Charter School was developed as a long-term strategy to address the educational needs of the community. However, immediate needs existed regarding the students currently enrolled in the Chester-Upland high schools. In response to the immediate need to improve the percentage of Chester-Upland School District college-bound students, Widener convened the presidents of five local colleges and universities to discuss what they might do collaboratively. The result was the Chester Higher Education Council, which was created to meet the critical educational needs of the children and families of Chester. Today, the Chester Higher Education Council is a 501(c)(3) association of six colleges and universities: Cheyney University, Delaware County Community College, Neumann University, Penn State Brandywine, Swarthmore College, and Widener University. This consortium is unique because it consists of a historically Black college, a community college, a faith-based institution, a satellite campus of a large public university, an elite liberal arts school, and an independent metropolitan university, respectively, and hence represents a distinct model of collaboration. Situated in southeastern Pennsylvania, these six institutions of higher education offer a comprehensive

and balanced approach to meeting the educational needs of the Chester community and simultaneously enriching its surrounding communities.

The Chester Higher Education Council coordinates activities among member institutions through regular meetings of their presidents, affording each institution the increased opportunity to leverage time, talent, and resources effectively. The College Access Center of Delaware County, which opened in February 2009, represents the first major initiative instituted by the Chester Higher Education Council. The United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania and United Way of Southeast Delaware County are also integral partners of the College Access Center. The Chester Higher Education Council and its partners provide valuable college admission, advising, academic, and financial aid guidance in support of the College Access Center's primary goal of increasing the number of successful college graduates.

The mission of the College Access Center is to provide underserved residents with programs and activities to enhance their access to and success in postsecondary education. The College Access Center offers free services to students from middle school through 12th grade and to adults who choose to pursue or complete a college degree. Resources such as SAT/ACT testing, advising, and financial aid guidance are provided by leveraging the institutions' resources. Located in a building owned by Widener, the College Access Center is equipped with a computer laboratory and resource room for residents to research a broad range of higher education opportunities. It also includes space for individual and group advising and workshops. More than 1,000 youths and adults were served by the center in its first year.

One last example of Widener as a convener is the Widener Center for Violence Prevention. This center emerged out of the Delaware County Violence Prevention Collaborative as a shared project between Widener and Crozer-Keystone Health System to address a critical community concern: violence. Over the years, violence in the City of Chester has escalated so much that the mayor of Chester has had to declare a state of emergency during certain times of the year due to the ongoing violence.

The Widener Center for Violence Prevention opened in fall 2009 to provide leadership among violence prevention organizations, to enhance interagency efforts, and to ensure effective service delivery. The collaborative includes more than 40 community partners, such as the U.S. Attorney's Office, Delaware County's District

Attorney's Office and Juvenile and District Courts, Upper Darby and Chester Police Departments, schools, and social service agencies. Upon this sound foundation, the Widener Center for Violence Prevention has developed expeditiously to divert approximately 40 youth from the criminal justice system via the Juvenile Screening Project. Working with the local police department and Juvenile Court, the Widener Center for Violence Prevention provided professional training on gang prevention (with 183 attendees) and the juvenile justice system (with 140 attendees), and hosted a Youth Anti-Violence Summit (with more than 600 youth attendees). Students and faculty are integrally involved with the Widener Center for Violence Prevention: Communications majors develop training videos, environmental science students use GIS (geographic information system) for asset mapping, criminal justice students and faculty conduct research, and social work graduate students take Practice with Communities and Organizations, a service-learning course in which they learn community mobilization, needs assessment, and coalition-building, integrating academic content with service.

A Final Reflection on 10 Years

In reflecting on Widener's journey, the success of our engagement over the past decade can be attributed to our multi-anchor democratic partnerships. During the last 10 years, we have learned that universities are not positioned to resolve poverty in distressed and underserved communities within a vacuum. Forming strategic and democratic partnerships with other anchor institutions, such as regional institutions of higher education, local hospitals and health care centers, faith-based organizations, community leaders (e.g., mayor, elected officials), and corporate investors has been integral to community development and the economic revitalization of the city. As an anchor institution, Widener is inextricably bound to the health and vitality of the Chester community and has instituted a place-based approach to ensure that existing institutional resources have the greatest impact (*Axelroth & Dubb, 2010*). This has been achieved by making substantial investments in securing funding and leveraging resources to address poverty, urban education, crime, local capacity building, and scholarly engagement.

Along the way, Widener has learned much from other institutions across the nation. Our membership in the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, as well as our affiliation with the Anchor Institutions Task Force, has positioned Widener to learn best practices from more than 100 other institutions whose core

values are (1) collaboration and partnership, (2) equity and social justice, (3) democracy and democratic practice, and (4) commitment to place and community. As we move forward with assessing the impact of our community-engagement practices, data will guide Widener's efforts to leverage our assets and engage community stakeholders in deeper strategic conversation focused on opportunities, challenges, and possible steps forward (*Anchor Institutions Task Force, 2010*).

Prior to 2002, Chester was widely perceived by the Widener administration as only a liability for the university. For decades, Widener experienced a distant, and sometimes strained, relationship with the community of Chester, which fostered distrust among local residents. The creation of a new mission and identity and the development of strategic partnerships have enabled Widener to address the pressing needs of its metropolitan region, allocate the investment of human and fiscal resources, and deliver sustainable and value-added civic engagement initiatives. In 2002, the mayor described Widener as a liability to the community. Fast-forward to 9 years later, and, during the dedication of a new academic building in spring 2011, the same mayor spoke about the substantial impact the university has had on Chester. In his words: "I don't know where Chester would be without Widener."

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About the Authors

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Miami Dade College and the Engaging Power of the Arts

Eduardo J. Padrón

Abstract

In this essay, the president of Miami Dade College describes the anchoring role that the institution plays in the Miami metropolitan region, with a particular emphasis on the many arts and cultural contributions. These efforts, combined with the economic and workforce development endeavors, make Miami Dade College a model anchor institution.

The Cuban revolution unfolded throughout the 1950s, culminating on January 1, 1959, when Fidel Castro's forces rolled into Havana and took control of the island nation. In the 2 years that followed, more than 200,000 Cubans landed in Miami, beginning a dramatic demographic change for South Florida (*United States Census Bureau, 2012*). In the ensuing years, additional waves of Cuban, Haitian, and other immigrants from Central and South America forever changed the landscape of South Florida.

Another event occurred in 1959, in Miami, that would prove essential in providing a pathway to economic and social integration for this enormous influx of new residents. The State of Florida gave formal approval to launch a new junior college in Miami. Classes opened in 1960 with 1,428 students. By 1967, Dade Junior College had become the largest institution of higher education in the state of Florida, enrolling more than 23,000 students. It was also the fastest growing junior college in the nation. It enrolled more freshmen than the University of Florida, Florida State University, and the University of South Florida combined.

We often speak of anchor institutions in economic terms, justly emphasizing the potential to leverage real estate holdings and procurement for overall economic impact. But Miami's history suggests an even broader understanding: The institution proved an anchor for countless lives. Its not hyperbole to suggest that this nascent community grew up and was enriched in the classrooms of its community college. Dade Junior has grown up to become Miami Dade College, the largest institution of higher education in the United States. In the coming months, the College will welcome its two millionth student, likely a member of the third generation of Latin immigrants who have transformed the economic and

cultural landscape of South Florida (*Motel & Patten, 2012*). It is nearly impossible to find an economic or civic arena in this community that is not led by a Miami Dade College graduate.

Miami Dade College has remained the anchoring mainstay of education and workforce development in the Miami metro region. Forty-six percent of Miami Dade College students live beneath the federal poverty level, and 67% are classified as low income. Equally significant, 56% are the first in their family to attend college (*Miami Dade College Office of Institutional Research, 2012*). The institution's educational reach stretches from college preparatory classes (71% of entering students are not ready for college-level work in at least one basic skill area, i.e., math, English, or reading) to 300 areas of study that culminate in specialized workforce certifications, as well as associate and baccalaureate degrees, many designed in collaboration with industry experts. The Honors College sends graduates to Ivy League and other top-flight institutions each year.

Many of these students are graduating in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), consistent with the trend throughout 21st-century higher education. While this may be the dictate of the job market, Miami Dade College has lent an ear to the CEOs (chief executive officers) who lead the STEM trailblazing companies. This source has offered a surprising counterargument, touting the humanities and the social sciences. "Give us people steeped in cultural diversity," they will tell you. "Give us people who are thoughtful and observant."

At Miami Dade College, the humanities and social sciences have remained a foundational element of the curriculum. Furthermore, our cultural programming has been our open invitation to the larger community, extending the classroom and a unique chance to learn through the arts.

Miami Dade College brought higher education to downtown Miami, Florida, in 1970 to a chorus of naysayers. Miami had lost its luster, and downtown was downright downtrodden. Engagement with the business community was essential to proving Wolfson experiment viable. In the 1970s, Miami Dade College's first foray to engage Miami's business community was with a concert series called Lunchtime Lively Arts. It was a successful college-community engagement endeavor, with denizens of the office towers flocking to the sunlit concerts and dance performances. The Lunchtime Lively Arts series inspired the establishment of today's Jazz at Wolfson Presents, which was founded in 1998 and remains among the longest-running jazz series in Miami-Dade County.

Miami Book Fair International

In the 1980s, Miami Dade College launched a citywide book fair in downtown Miami. It was met with raised eyebrows and even outright derision. This was 1984, the days of Miami's cocaine cowboys, racial strife, and paradise lost. Miami's capital crime drew far more attention than its intellectual capital. But our little band of believers—a couple of independent booksellers and a few dreamers at Miami Dade College—ignored the catcalls.

We called that first book fair *Books by the Bay*, and as the saying goes, “If you build it, they will come.” Did they ever. That first year (1984), upward of 25,000 people who did not believe the negative headlines about their city strolled among the booksellers' and publishers' booths, and whiled away the 3-day inaugural book fair chatting with authors. We had almost proved the naysayers wrong, and for Year 2 our hard-won confidence inspired us to rename this event the Miami Book Fair International (the Book Fair). The event began to take on its full identity, adding a roster of Spanish-language authors headlined by Mario Vargas Llosa. In 1985, Garrison Keillor, Allen Ginsburg, and 50 other writers and poets joined in. Miami Book Fair International was officially on the map. The talk among authors was, indeed, that Miami's book fair was great fun and the place to be in November.

But it was not just fun in the sun that would draw authors from around the globe year after year. The Miami community had descended on this event and embraced it. More than 1,000 community volunteers joined Miami Dade College staff to produce the Book Fair. In 1998, Tom Wolfe would call Miami Book Fair International the “literary mecca of the Western World” (*Gerard, 2010*).

The Arts and Humanities and College-Community Engagement

When we think of the great cultural centers of the world, we typically think of places like Paris, Vienna, Prague, London, and Buenos Aires. And, while we will always have our cultural bookends of Los Angeles chic and New York City sophistication, for better or worse, the recent branding of American cities and regions more often than not highlights their economic sectors. We are all aware of Silicon Valley, California; the Nike empire of the Portland, Oregon, region; Microsoft's influence in Seattle, Washington; and the research triangle of Raleigh-Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. These cities and regions and their remarkably successful

product brands are a reflection of America's historic ingenuity and entrepreneurship. Arts and culture are not tangible assets like economic sectors; they are not easily monetized, and consequently it is far too easy to ignore their rich contributions to the well-being of communities.

Far from the cultural wasteland that some had portrayed it as in the 1970s and 1980s, Miami was a community that just needed a chance to demonstrate what it valued. Further, the Book Fair and many of Miami Dade College's arts and culture initiatives continue to be the means to fulfill the college's mandate to engage the community. While I would never downplay the importance of math, science, and communication skills, learning via the arts is incomparable. What can occur as witness to great art is a moment to change the course of a life. In the end, is that not what our institutions are all about?

The Miami Book Fair International has doubtless been catalyst to many such moments. The year 2012 marked the 29th edition of the Book Fair, now an 8-day event that draws a remarkable half million fairgoers from South Florida and beyond. It is not only the Miami community's most beloved cultural event, but also a tourist attraction that does, indeed, generate a monetary benefit. The Book Fair is supported by public and private sponsors. There was no admission charge until 2007, when we began charging \$5. It remains free of charge to the more than 20,000 children who attend; it is still the best bargain in town. But it should be noted that sponsors, some 60 in 2012, have been essential in powering the Book Fair through the years. Today, the Book Fair's sponsors include Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, American Airlines, and the Children's Trust.

I knew the Book Fair had truly arrived many years ago when I noticed a young boy, maybe 7 or 8 years of age, tucked against a wall on the Miami Dade College campus, legs folded, book in lap, oblivious to the swirling crowds around him. To this day, that image is crystal clear in my memory bank. If he had managed to pull his eyes from the page, he would have seen what we call the Street Fair. It is a scene to behold: The streets surrounding Miami Dade College's downtown Wolfson Campus are closed off to host more than 300 colored tents, sheltering the tomes of publishers and booksellers of every ilk: Antiquarian Annex, with its trove of weathered volumes; International Village, showcasing the art and literature of that year's highlighted countries; Comix Gallery, with an array of graphic novels and vintage comic books; and, of course, Children's Alley, jumping off the page with Harry Potter, Disney

characters, and more, as well as plays and readings from authors who have spent the week prior to the Book Fair visiting Miami-Dade County's public schools.

Every available meeting space on campus hosts the 300 authors and poets, including a Spanish-language contingent, who grace the Book Fair each year. Since 1984, the authors and poets participating have included 12 Nobel Prizes, 60 Pulitzer Prizes, 30 National Book Awards, 35 American Book Awards, 12 PEN/Faulkner Awards for Fiction, and 10 Premio Miguel de Cervantes Prize recipients. The Book Fair has also welcomed authors and U.S. Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, as well as U.S. First Lady Barbara Bush. Miami Book Fair International is truly the place to be in November.

The Center for Literature and Theatre at Miami Dade College

Miami Dade College established the Florida Center for the Literary Arts in 2001, with the intention that the Center would promote the appreciation of literature, in all forms, throughout the entire year. A generous grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation helped to establish the Center as well as a permanent endowment. This support provided a strong foundation, and full programming began in January 2002.

Renamed the Center for Literature and Theatre, the Center is a college-wide academic and cultural initiative that serves both students and residents of Miami-Dade County. The Center is now an umbrella organization with year-round programming that embraces authors and writing, reading and literacy, as well as the administration of Miami Book Fair International and Miami Dade College's Spanish-language theater initiative, Teatro Prometeo.

Well-known and emerging writers offer presentations to the community and visit Miami Dade College classrooms to dialogue with faculty and students. Each May, the Writers Institute presents renowned authors who offer 4 days of intensive workshops on poetry, fiction, nonfiction, journalism, publishing, and more. Non-credit creative writing courses are offered throughout the year as well, providing anyone in the community the chance to polish the writing craft and share the work with a supportive community of writers. Literacy initiatives include Story Time, Spanish Authors in America, and Current Voices in Literature, encouraging appreciation for books and enhancing reading skills of children and adults.

One of the more extraordinary community engagement projects of the Center has been the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation–supported Miami: City of Refuge project in 2011. The Cities of Refuge North America program provides safe haven for writers exiled under threat of death, imprisonment, or persecution in their native countries. Miami: City of Refuge writer-in-residence was exiled Zimbabwean poet, educator, and champion of social causes, Chenjerai Hove. He was available to students, faculty, and the Miami community at large throughout 2011, speaking on topics of global literature, writing, human rights and social justice, and freedom of expression. Or, as he put it, “freedom after expression.”

The close relationship between theater and literature prompted the Center to embrace Teatro Prometeo in summer 2006. Prometeo was founded at Miami Dade College 40 years ago with the mission of preserving the Spanish language and Hispanic culture. Besides a yearly calendar of plays and children’s theater programs, Teatro Prometeo offers classes in acting, voice and speech, movement, singing, playwriting, and camera-acting technique. Prometeo’s 2-year Professional Actor Training Program is unique in the nation for offering conservatory-style actor training in Spanish.

The Art Gallery System

In the midst of too many fiscal crises and legislative skirmishes, meeting with students is the built-in reminder of why all those battles are worth fighting. As I was making my way to my office one day, one very excited student, just returned from study abroad, intercepted me for an impromptu meeting. “Dr. Padrón, you wouldn’t believe what happened to me.” He went on to describe how he had found himself suddenly in tears before a painting in the Rembrandt House Museum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. “Suddenly, I was seeing it. I never knew I could see like that.”

In the 5 years following enactment of the No Child Left Behind legislation, 44% of public school systems in the United States had reduced or eliminated classes in the arts, music, history, social studies, and physical education in the frenzy to ready students for standardized tests in math and English (*McMurrer, 2007*). This is understandable, given that federal and state dollars, school status, and teacher and principal evaluations are often contingent on student performance in these areas. This approach, however, narrows the definition of what it means to be smart. I remember a young interior designer of immense talent who could walk into a room and immediately see the potential in light, space, and color. Yet she

often lamented her lack of intelligence because her abilities did not fit traditional academic expectations. That we are systematically eliminating the arts as a context for learning is preposterous.

The painting that the returning study abroad student referred to was Rembrandt's *Jeremiah Contemplating the Destruction of the Temple*. Jeremiah is humanity's universal mourner, and that study abroad student was surely not the first to shed tears in front of him. The same day I met that student, another temple—a mosque in Iraq—exploded, killing scores of people. In front of which temple, I wondered, would parents around the world want their children to stand?

Not exactly a temple, but a shrine of sorts, Miami's Freedom Tower was donated to Miami Dade College in 2003. Dwarfed now by towers of steel and glass, she is no less a work of art, her steeple a tribute to the culture of old Seville, Spain. Stories of Miami have unfolded in the Freedom Tower's corridors, dating back to 1925 when the tower was home to *The Miami News* (a daily newspaper from 1896 to 1988) as it chronicled the early boom days when Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway brought the rest of America to the Florida tropics. In 1958, however, the Freedom Tower became Miami's version of Ellis Island, greeting wave after wave of Cuban exiles about to reinvent their lives and forever change the landscape of South Florida. I was 15 years old, wondering what would become of me, when the Freedom Tower was the most beautiful building I had ever seen. She was my Statue of Liberty.

Today, the Freedom Tower is the centerpiece of Miami Dade College's Art Gallery System. And like the Book Fair, the galleries at each of Miami Dade College's campuses have opened their doors to a world of experience for people from every corner of the community. Young students, accompanied by teachers and parents, have been exposed to expressions of beauty and passion that they might otherwise never encounter. The building's lower levels have been transformed into museum-quality space, hosting a permanent photography exhibit of the exile experience in Miami. The Freedom Tower is also home to an immense and colorful mural of the world that is etched in the memory of each new arrival who has looked up to trace his or her own path. This mural was restored and unveiled in 2009 to the delight of a nostalgic and appreciative audience.

The Freedom Tower has already hosted some of the world's most renowned artworks. In partnership with the celebrated Caixanova Bank collection of Spain, a collection of 218 of Francisco Goya's engravings made their Florida premiere in 2008. This exhibit

included the rather disquieting portrayals from his *Disasters of War* series. These are compelling images that fulfill the promise of art – to inspire reflection on the state of our world and our beliefs.

In 2009, a second exhibit on loan from the CaixaNova Bank's collection included Salvadore Dali's *The Divine Comedy*, a commemorative series commissioned by the Italian government to honor the 700th birthday of one of Italy's greatest poets, Dante Alighieri. It is a remarkable collection of some 100 prints for each canto of the poem, and again, most in the Miami-Dade County community likely would live their entire lives without the chance to stand in front of this quality of art. These shows and all the exhibits at Miami Dade College's campus galleries are free to the public or accessible at a minimal cost.

Beyond the renown of Goya and Dali, all manner of installations have offered a treasure trove of experiences for Miami Dade College students and members of the Miami-Dade County community. A few additional examples are worth recounting. The 2009–2010 season at the Freedom Tower opened with *Under a Brilliant Sun*, 80 paintings, drawings, and sculptures from Cundo Bermudez, one of Cuba's most beloved artists, with members of the Miami community loaning several pieces from their personal collections to enrich the exhibition.

The 2009–2010 season continued with *Invasion 68 Prague*, which introduced South Floridians to the work of Josef Koudelka. Koudelka was a 30-year-old theater photographer who had never photographed a news event until the night of August 21, 1968, when his camera gave witness to Warsaw Pact tanks drawing a dark shadow across Czechoslovakia's Prague Spring. Forty years after the invasion, nearly 60 of these searing images have obvious resonance. The images for this exhibit, at which most of them were shown for the first time, were personally selected by Koudelka. The artist, whose work has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Hayward Gallery in London, among others, was not only present for the exhibit's opening, but also met with young photographers and their professors at Miami Dade College.

Finally, in 2011, *The Etruscans in Latium* brought a vision of 700 B.C. to this very modern community, with contributions from many of the most important Etruscan museums in Italy, including Cerveteri, Tarquinia, and Vulci. Artifacts included pottery, a sarcophagus lid, and a specially re-created three-dimensional tomb complete with re-creations of the paintings as they were discovered in situ.

The availability of these works of art makes a statement about value. Each of these exhibits and the constant flow of art and culture that Miami Dade College is committed to bringing to the Miami community challenges the definition of popular culture. Cannot Goya and Dali be popular? Should not great artists be accessible to the entire community? As the former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, Dana Gioia, suggested in his Stanford commencement address in 2007, “The marketplace does only one thing—it puts a price on everything.” He went on to say that culture should instruct not on the price of things but on their value. “Culture should tell us what is beyond price” (*Gioia, 2007*).

In that regard, Miami Dade College’s 50th anniversary celebration in 2009 called upon the art world in support of this anchor institution’s most basic mission, opening the door to college to anyone in the Miami community seeking a college education. Through a series of anniversary events, highlighted by a specially curated exhibition and sale of artworks from throughout the Americas, Miami Dade College was able to raise \$5 million in the single most successful charitable event in the community’s history. This was a clear case of one value enhancing another. The American Dream Scholarship was established, providing graduates of any Miami–Dade County high school, public or private, who had a 3.0 grade point average and college-ready entrance exam scores, access to a 2-year full tuition scholarship to Miami Dade College. At a moment of economic recession and limited funding to public educational institutions, the arts played a significant role in providing access to a college education for many of the young people in our community.

Art in Public Places

Beyond Miami Dade College’s galleries, our campuses have become venues for art in public places. The North Campus, our largest at 245 acres and located in northern Miami–Dade County, offers 14 dramatic and large sculptures, and 79 mid-size pieces. The campus is now one of the largest sculpture parks in the state of Florida and showcases the Halegua Collection, monumental sculptures that reside in 33 museums and public places worldwide, including the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Both our downtown Wolfson Campus and the Kendall Campus in the southern region of the county also host impressive sculptures.

Miami Live Arts.

Celebrating its 23rd season in 2013, Miami Dade College's Miami Live Arts performance series reflects the excitement and diversity of the College and the larger South Florida community. The series has a celebrated history of featuring international and culturally specific work, both traditional and contemporary, which would not otherwise be seen in this region.

Although Latin American and Caribbean performances have dominated the yearly calendar, artists from throughout the world have delivered to Miamians a striking array of artistic expressions. They have included India's Ali Akbar Khan, Ravi Shankar, and the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble; Argentina's Teatro del Sur; Russia's Alla Demidova, performing with Claire Bloom; Susan Sontag with Min Tanaka from Japan; Brazil's pop mega stars Gilberto Gil and Gal Costa and the legendary Astrid Gilberto; Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker's Rosas Company from Belgium; Farafina, a dance and music company from Burkina Faso; Urban Bush Women; John Kelly and Company; Ralph Lemon; Mario Bauza and the Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra; Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company; Miranda July; Paquito D'Rivera Quintet; Stewart Copeland; Philip Glass and Robert Wilson; the Spanish Harlem Orchestra; Branford Marsalis; and many others.

Less visible than the performances, the residency component of Miami Live Arts is nonetheless vital to the mission of Miami Dade College's Cultural Affairs Department, which strives not only to present excellence in the performing arts, but also to develop future artists and audiences through educational outreach. Most of the artists who perform each season share their experience and talent during extended residencies. Some residencies aim to build new audiences; some provide professional development opportunities to local artists. Others address the social issues explored in an artist's work, while still more focus on technique or history.

Miami Dade College strives to make its programs accessible by choosing performance venues and residency partners in neighborhoods throughout Miami-Dade County, presenting work from diverse cultures and in different languages, and providing low-cost group sale tickets and free tickets to select organizations. Miami Live Arts artists reach young audiences in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, students of Miami Dade College, and the community at large through neighborhood community and cultural centers.

One of my favorite performances was by the New Orleans ReBirth Brass Band. The band often marches in the funeral processions so characteristic of the New Orleans traditions, but that night in 2002 they played in the concrete courtyard of an arts complex that provides work space to dozens of emerging artists in the African American Overtown neighborhood in Miami. What they created that night was more than a sound, more than the motion of hundreds of people. It was a communion of sorts, the horns seemingly blowing down the separation between strangers. It was an event that left an impression—one that got under the skin in the best possible way. I am insistent that Miami Dade College provide a home to such experiences.

Center for Cultural Collaborations

In 1996, with seed money from the Ford Foundation, Miami Dade College created the Center for Cultural Collaborations International to gather human and financial resources needed to assist artists in creating new work and making lasting, meaningful ties to the community. For 2010–2011, Miami Dade College’s Cultural Affairs Department provided commissioning funds to artists, supporting the creation of new work via a local developmental residency that emphasized engagement with the community in the art-making process. The Cultural Affairs Department also provided marketplace advocacy on the benefits to the community of a thriving arts sector, professional administration services, financial management, and other support to these projects during the creative process. Several of these supported initiatives found their way to expression via the Miami Live Arts performance series.

Miami International Film Festival

Between the traditions of Hollywood cinema and emerging digital media, the call of “let’s go to the movies” has never held a broader appeal. And as the geographical and cultural crossroads of the Americas, Miami is fertile ground for a rich blend of cinematic traditions. The Miami International Film Festival (the Festival) is one of only a few film festivals in the United States operated by an educational institution. It has become a world-class platform for film and filmmakers, offering the best of emerging and established film. The Miami International Film Festival, however, is the natural gateway for the discovery of Ibero-American talent, and is an unparalleled educational venue for filmmakers of every stripe. It affords professionals, both emerging and seasoned, an

opportunity to discover, discuss, and develop the art and business of Ibero-American cinema. In doing so, the Festival serves to promote Miami, Florida, as an educational and international film destination. Considered the most prominent Ibero-American-centric film festival in the United States, the Miami International Film Festival attracts more than 40 world, U.S., and East Coast premieres. In addition to 70,000 audience members, it is attended by over 250 industry-related individuals, including filmmakers, producers, talent, press, and industry executives every year. The 2013 Festival saw the screening of 117 feature films and 12 short films from 41 countries.

Encuentros, or Encounters, is the cornerstone of the Miami International Film Festival's Industry Program. It annually brings together influential industry professionals from all corners of the globe to meet with filmmakers in the Iberian diaspora (Spain, Portugal, South America, Central America, the Caribbean, and Spanish- or Portuguese-language audiences in the United States) who have culturally interesting and commercially viable feature film projects in various stages of development. In addition, the festival's REEL Education Seminar Series, presented in partnership with the University of Miami, consistently attracts top executives from Warner Bros. Entertainment, Sony Pictures Classics, IFC (Independent Film Channel) Films, Fox Searchlight, DreamWorks Animation, and HBO (Home Box Office) Films/HBO Latino.

Students, film buffs, and aspiring filmmakers pack these events, made free to the public via sponsorship support. Sponsorship, of course, is a crucial aspect of the Festival's success, allowing Miami Dade College to make the films and the educational events available at minimal cost. Overall, 50 sponsors lent their support at varying levels to the 2013 Festival, led by The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, American Airlines, Comcast, the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, and HBO Latin America. In addition to the industry and educational aspects of filmmaking, the Festival's organizers do their best to roll out the red carpet and bring the excitement of the movies to the Miami community. Career tributes and yearly awards have recognized some of the most creative and enduring names in film as well as up-and-coming filmmakers. Career honors have gone to the great Swedish actress Liv Ullman, as well as Danish filmmaker Susanne Bier, whose film *In a Better World* captured both the 2011 Golden Globe Award and 2011 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

New World School of the Arts

A visit to this inner-city arts haven in downtown Miami turns up a band of neo-bohemians dressed in tights and a range of old hippie garb. You recognize them by the eager conversation, spontaneous dance steps down the sidewalk, and sudden bursts of song. This is New World School of the Arts, a quintessential dream factory for the young artists of Miami. New World School of the Arts is one the country's premier conservatories, providing a comprehensive program of artistic training, academic development, and preparation for careers in dance, music, theater, and visual arts. It is a long-standing partnership between Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Miami Dade College, and the University of Florida, offering training to students beginning in high school and culminating in a bachelor of fine arts degree.

New World School of the Arts is a wonderful example of what public education can achieve. Students apply via audition and/or portfolio, and while their talent is honed they also receive a first-class liberal learning foundation. The high school division is repeatedly among the nation's most highly rated, with its college-going rate near 100% each year (*U.S. News*, 2012). Both high school and college graduates of the New World School of the Arts are everywhere today, gracing stages from Los Angeles to New York City. But while they are learning their way through school, they are on stage and in galleries for the entire Miami community, showcasing a dazzling collection of young talent.

New World School of the Arts students are not the only young people at Miami Dade College putting their talent on display. In-depth programs in the visual arts, music, dance, and theater are offered at every campus of Miami Dade College. Moreover, each campus hosts a range of events, from the Latin Jazz Concert at the Kendall Campus in the southern part of Miami-Dade County to the Festival of the Arts at the North Campus. The Wolfson Campus offers one of higher education's most respected Spanish-language theater programs, Teatro Prometeo, engaging students in theater productions each semester.

Miami Leadership Roundtable

Arts and cultural programming help us to support a community of quality, one that is able to cross boundaries of thought and belief to find commonality. Another example of this support is the Miami Leadership Roundtable, Miami Dade College's speakers series, which has contributed a remarkable range of speaker perspectives. The speaker series provides members of the Miami

community and the College's students with the essential raw material for understanding world events in new ways. For example: "In the final analysis, the main source of our troubles is not outside, but within us, in our attitudes toward one another, toward society and nature." That was 2006, and the speaker was President Mikhail Gorbachev, daring his audience to consider a new perspective.

President Gorbachev was preceded at the Roundtable in 2006 by another global pioneer, the former president of Poland (1990–1995) and leader of the Solidarity movement (an independent trade union), Lech Walesa. Both Gorbachev and Walesa challenged their listeners to see beyond ideologies and borders. For the Miami community, a community woven from the most diverse fabric, it was a message with personal resonance. Past Roundtable speakers have included Al Gore, Bill Clinton, Dan Rather, David Brinkley, Eugene McCarthy, George Will, George Soros, Gerald Ford, Indra Nooyi, Jehan Sadat, Jimmy Carter, Madeleine Albright, Oliver Stone, Ralph Nader, Robert McNamara, Shirley Chisholm, Terry Waite, Tip O'Neill, and Tom Wolfe, among others.

Conclusion

Anchor institutions have emerged as critical drivers of the economic dynamic, spurring investment in local and minority entrepreneurs through procurement and contracts as well as expanding employment in the region. And of course, beyond economics, the basic missions of the educational, medical, government, and civic sectors support a seemingly boundless range of quality factors.

Institutions like Miami Dade College hold special relevance, as suggested by their designation as "community colleges." For these colleges, the mission statement invariably offers a commitment to be responsive to the needs of the residents and workforce elements within the community. Again, the latter suggests strong economic support, such as developing specific educational and training programs that are relevant to regional workforce needs. But a much deeper impact occurs under the rubric of responsiveness. In Miami, for instance, poverty is an intractable community challenge that demands attention. The City of Miami, according to the U.S. Census, is the sixth-poorest large city in the United States, based on median family income (*United States Census Bureau, 2009*). In turn, as noted earlier, two thirds of Miami Dade College's student population falls into categories of poverty or low income, and more than half the students are the first in their families to attend college. Miami Dade College's motto reads, "Opportunity

Changes Everything,” and such a sentiment might well be extended to anchor institutions overall.

As anchor institutions demonstrate, the quality of life in a community is determined by many factors. Miami Dade College’s effort to ensure that the arts are accessible throughout the community suggests that the most refined and wondrous of qualitative elements can become a reliable ingredient in each community member’s life. We should view these opportunities, just as we should view the chance to gain a college education, as far more essential than we do now, something akin to a birthright. These opportunities imply that anchor institutions are affecting not only the macro spheres of economics, health, and education, but also the subtler realms of experience that occur in a darkened theater, in front of a rare masterwork, or long into a page-turning night. Anchor institutions, indeed, have the chance to play an unparalleled role in the rebirth and growth of cities across America.

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A College's Role in Developing and Supporting an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Thomas K. McKeon

Abstract

From the earliest oil pioneers to today's business startups, entrepreneurs have paved the road to success for Oklahoma. Small businesses account for more than 80% of the business community in each of the state's two largest cities. Higher education must take a leadership role in developing and sustaining a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem for small business. Community colleges are uniquely designed to nourish an entrepreneurial ecosystem in light of their ability to quickly respond to business and community needs, design curriculum to meet industry demands, and generate meaningful advances in the community's economic development. Budding entrepreneurs often look to the community college as the most flexible and accessible means to reach their goal of starting a new business. A college involved in cultivating and nurturing an entrepreneurial ecosystem must exhibit its own entrepreneurial spirit while creating an environment where discoveries are made, learning is emphasized, and lives are changed.

Introduction

Entrepreneurs have historically served as a vital component in Oklahoma's economic development. From the earliest oil pioneers to today's business startups, entrepreneurs have paved the road to success for the state. For example, according to the 2011 *Greater Oklahoma City Economic Forecast*, 92% of the 77,000 stand-alone or headquartered businesses in the Oklahoma City metropolitan statistical area have fewer than 10 employees (Evans & Long, 2011). Small businesses constitute 82% of Tulsa's business community and generate a \$3.1 billion impact on the city's economy each year (Tulsa Regional Chamber, 2012). Higher education must stand at the forefront of efforts to develop and sustain a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem within which these individuals and their businesses can function.

In its earlier years, Tulsa focused on specific industries for the backbone of its economic development: oil, telecommunications, aerospace, and others. Unfortunately, that kind of singular investment resulted in significant economic fallout when companies left, industries declined, and layoffs occurred. More recently,

it has become apparent that Tulsa must diversify in order to grow its economy consistently. An entrepreneurial city requires four key elements: (1) an infrastructure that makes it easier for new firms to enter the market; (2) a higher percentage of the population with college degrees, which translates to a more educated workforce; (3) state and local policymakers who focus on developing a region that offers bright, entrepreneurial people and the quality of life they desire; and (4) robust relationships between educational institutions and entrepreneurialism (Glaeser & Kerr, 2010). Tulsa has intentionally positioned itself to offer all four of these key ingredients to budding entrepreneurs.

Named to *Southern Business and Development's* Top 10 Pro-Business Communities list in April 2011, Tulsa has been recognized for its low cost of living, business-friendly environment, and positive forecast for job growth (*Ten Pro-business*, 2011). That kind of favorable business climate strongly appeals to entrepreneurs. In fact, Oklahoma's strong pro-business climate, reflected in ongoing collaborative government-business programs such as Oklahoma's Quality Jobs Program (*Oklahoma Department of Commerce*, 2012) and other tax incentive programs, along with Oklahoma's demonstrated strong work ethic among employees, have converged to rank the state 11th nationally in *Chief Executive's* 2011 Best States for Business rankings (Donlon, 2011).

Colleges often include supporting a region's pro-business climate as part of their mission. Community colleges are uniquely designed to nourish the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in light of their ability to quickly respond to business and community needs, design curriculum to meet industry demands, and generate meaningful advances in the community's economic development.

In fact, the community college often acts as the convener for community-wide initiatives. As an educational institution, a college can take on the role of inviting all key constituents to the dialogue. In the case of creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem, the college setting also serves as a means to recognize potential entrepreneurs: those individuals who are returning to school and trying something new or making significant changes in their lives. These budding entrepreneurs often look to the community college as the most flexible and accessible means to reach their goal of entering the market with a new business. For the college, however, finding the best instructional methods and venues to equip these entrepreneurial students with the knowledge and tools they need to be successful presents a challenge.

Creating new instructional programs can be complex for several reasons. As with virtually any bureaucratic institution, many well-intentioned people can take on the role of college gatekeeper. Their focus lies in preserving and protecting what they perceive as the academic integrity of the institution. However, a college involved in cultivating and nurturing an entrepreneurial ecosystem must in fact exhibit its own entrepreneurial spirit. It must be willing to bend rules and develop new processes, enlist faculty and staff who are like-minded and understand the ultimate goal, and then work diligently toward success. A program champion often can accelerate the process and bring a project to fruition.

In Tulsa, these efforts have already produced results. In 2007, former Tulsa mayor Kathy Taylor, joined by a group of Tulsa's business leaders, developed the Tulsa Spirit Award competition to inspire an increase in entrepreneurial endeavors in Tulsa. In 2012, Tulsa Community College and the Lobeck Taylor Family Foundation became joint sponsors of the annual competition, now called the TCC StartUp Cup powered by the Lobeck Taylor Family Foundation (TCC StartUp Cup) and open to businesses in the Tulsa area in operation less than 5 years and with a net worth of less than \$1 million. Since its inception in 2007, finalists in Tulsa's annual entrepreneurship award competition have added \$8,287,740 to Tulsa's annual payroll, with an average salary of \$46,043 (*S. Griffin, personal communication, January 17, 2011*).

Also in 2010, Tulsa Community College announced the development of Launch: Your Entrepreneurial Journey (Launch), a new paradigm in non-traditional instruction designed to help local entrepreneurs take their ideas to market. The program functions as a coaching model that, over the course of 16 weeks, walks people interested in the entrepreneurial journey through the steps to begin their business. Nearly two years in development, the program was an "instant success." In its first year of existence, Tulsa Community College's Launch program added \$1,353,664 to Tulsa's annual payroll, with 29 new jobs created by seven new startups.

What leads to that kind of success? Those involved in Launch's development point to the involvement of more than 50 thought leaders from Tulsa's business community. These 50 proven, ongoing entrepreneurs have both succeeded and failed in business startups over the years. As thought leaders in Launch, they share their experiences and lessons learned (an invaluable commodity) with Launch participants.

A thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem requires the kind of synergy that has developed organically in Tulsa. Tulsa's Global Entrepreneurship Week, an annual weeklong assortment of events focused on recognizing and revitalizing Tulsa's entrepreneurial spirit, has led much of this effort. As a Tulsa Global Entrepreneurship Week partner, Tulsa Community College is directly involved in creating a vibrant, evolving environment that supports the development of new ideas, business models, and startup companies that build the local economy. Moreover, Tulsa Community College's Center for Creativity has become a hub for entrepreneurial activity on the southern end of Tulsa's downtown corridor and hosts many events that appeal to entrepreneurs, such as the finale of the TCC StartUp Cup competition, various Launch sessions, and other entrepreneur-related events throughout the year.

Clearly, the role of colleges and universities is critical to developing and supporting a thriving ecosystem for entrepreneurs. By serving as a collaborator and convener of those entities interested in fostering entrepreneurialism and thereby supporting its community's and its state's economic development, a college or university makes an indelible mark on the future. As a college undergirds and supports budding entrepreneurs, it supports all segments of its community by creating, nourishing, and cultivating an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The collective energy generated by this kind of atmosphere in which discoveries are made, learning is emphasized, and lives are changed reflects the very essence of higher education.

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Lehigh University and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Partnering to Transform a Steel Town into a College Town

Frederick J. McGrail

Abstract

Since Lehigh University was founded in 1865, it has been inextricably tied to the City of Bethlehem in eastern Pennsylvania. Rich in history and steeped in cultural tradition, the area continues to be an outstanding home for the university. In the aftermath of the fall of Bethlehem Steel, Lehigh and community partners are working together to forge a prosperous future.

Introduction

A university brings intellectual vibrancy and collaborative opportunity to its home town. The possibilities for cross-cultural, cross-generational, and cross-socioeconomic progress are great and need to be seized. By working closely with the “town,” those in the “gowns” benefit from experiences that will alter their life trajectories. Lehigh University (Lehigh) is striving to be the resource its community is looking for, and the launching point for graduates’ lives of serving others. With that in mind, Lehigh is developing a strategic initiative that will truly make it an anchor in the community, a role that is relatively new for this institution.

Since Lehigh University first opened its doors in 1865, it has been inextricably tied to the City of Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley region in eastern Pennsylvania. Rich in history and steeped in cultural tradition, the area continues to be an outstanding home for the university. Lehigh University’s history is closely related to the rise and progress of the United States as an industrial power. The vision of Lehigh’s founder Asa Packer—an industrial pioneer, entrepreneur, and philanthropist—created the foundation for generations of students to learn and live among the nation’s most distinguished scholars. Like other universities started during the industrial revolution, Lehigh University was founded with a mission of creating an educated workforce that was imbued with a useful, commonsense education and that could contribute to the building of the nation (*Yates, 1992, p. 22*). In pursuing that mission, Lehigh formed a close relationship with its community and region.

As a major steel hub, Bethlehem has followed a trajectory similar to that of many other U.S. industrial towns. The rise and

fall of the industrial powerhouse Bethlehem Steel Corporation left Bethlehem at a crossroads. As a result, the city continues to undergo a tremendous transformation, seeking to invigorate its neighborhoods, redefine economic prosperity, and address a full range of critical social issues in order to strengthen the community. The bankruptcy of Bethlehem Steel left a sizable void, but in close partnership with other organizations, Lehigh University has helped to fill that void and become a leader in the community's renaissance.

Although Lehigh University has a long history of collaboration with members of the Bethlehem community, it has recently developed a more formal framework for community engagement. More important, Lehigh's commitment to the community is a major component of a 10-year institutional strategic plan (http://www.lehigh.edu/2009plan/LU_strategicplan.pdf) that was approved by its board of trustees and adopted in 2009. The framework for the Lehigh-Bethlehem partnership includes four strategic priorities:

- Clean and safe environment
- Support of public education
- Commercial vitality
- Neighborhood revitalization

This four-priority framework allows Lehigh's leaders to discuss tangible goals with interested parties in a more meaningful way. These goals include partnering with local school districts on the improvement of student performance in local elementary and middle schools, assisting local businesses in improving commerce, and reducing crime through partnerships with local law enforcement.

Lehigh is communicating the four broader strategic priorities to its core constituencies, including local organizations and non-profit organizations, government officials, area businesses, faculty, staff, students, and trustees. The framework identifies areas where Lehigh can play a role in each of the priorities and allows for a discussion about what that role might be, what partners might be involved, what other resources might be available, what is the best timing, and what actions among many possibilities should take priority. In this process, Lehigh works to ensure that we are collaborating with community leaders rather than imposing ourselves on them. Through the university's partnership with the Bethlehem community to address the four community needs, Lehigh is now

considered a leader in the community, and well on its way to becoming a committed anchor institution.

Lehigh's greatest contribution to its community lies in its human and intellectual capital. It is Lehigh's belief that this capital can be used to benefit the Bethlehem community, while simultaneously providing value and important life experiences to students, faculty members, and staff members. In order to better understand what Lehigh is doing to contribute its human and intellectual capital to become an anchor institution, readers need to understand the evolution of the City of Bethlehem over the last 150 years, particularly the area south of the Lehigh River known as South Bethlehem, where Lehigh University is situated. The area had been a hub of industrial activity since the 18th century, and Lehigh's roots are grounded in that activity.

Setting the Context: In the Shadow of the Steel

In 1865, Asa Packer, president of Lehigh Valley Railroad, made a \$500,000 gift to build a university that would contribute to the "intellectual and moral improvement" of men in the Lehigh Valley (*Yates, 1992, p. 22*). It was the largest donation of its kind to any educational institution in America at that time. The site that Packer chose for his university was a railroad junction across the Lehigh River from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a community founded in 1741 by Moravian missionaries. The site was selected in part because it was within walking distance for managers of the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

Packer laid the tracks of his Lehigh Valley Railroad along the Lehigh River to bring coal and raw materials from the Pocono Mountains to the markets of New York City and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. By 1857, the Saucona Iron Company—later called the Bethlehem Iron Company—was formed in South Bethlehem along those tracks. Steel was first produced at this plant in 1873, and the company later officially became the Bethlehem Steel Corporation (*Venditta & Hilliard, 2010*). Bethlehem Steel Corporation grew to become the second-largest steel producer in the world and held tremendous influence over the city and its citizens for 140 years. Lehigh University grew in the shadow of Bethlehem Steel Corporation over that same period and was a passive neighbor to the South Bethlehem community as it focused on its educational mission.

Lehigh produced thousands of graduates, many of whom would matriculate into positions within the steel company, but it

never wielded the influence that Bethlehem Steel Corporation did within the community. Bethlehem Steel Corporation was responsible for developing the structural steel that raised the New York City skyline, for producing the steel that supported such U.S. structural icons as the Golden Gate and George Washington Bridges, and for producing the battleships and armaments that saw the U.S. through two major world wars. Lehigh was so entwined in the influence of Bethlehem Steel Corporation that classes at Lehigh started at 10 minutes after the hour to allow those working a shift at the steel plant time to get to their class—a practice that continues to this day.

By the 1960s and 1970s, Bethlehem, like so many other cities across the United States, had seen a population shift toward suburban communities, drawing both merchants and residents away from the urban commercial districts that thrived during the first half of the century. Bethlehem's city administration was determined to follow the direction other cities had taken to "re-urbanize" by tearing down the commercial core of the city, and building a modern office and commercial district to draw business back.

Bethlehem has two distinct commercial districts, one north of the Lehigh River in the oldest section of town, and one south of the river that grew around the Bethlehem Steel plant. In the late 1960s, Bethlehem's city leaders focused their efforts in the commercial district north of the Lehigh River and began by leveling major portions of it to build a modern commercial complex. By the mid-1970s, a different path was taken when Mayor Gordon Mowrer recognized the historical significance of this district and put redevelopment dollars into reviving it as a visitor destination. The transformation was successful and this area, now known as the Historic District, remains a vibrant shopping and dining area today (*Mowrer, 2010*).

While the north side appeared secure in its historical setting, the survival of the commercial district south of the river and adjacent to Lehigh University and the steel plant—commonly known as South Bethlehem—remained dependent on the influence of the thousands of Bethlehem Steel Corporation employees who lived in and walked to work through its streets. Minimal community and economic development dollars were put into the South Bethlehem commercial district at that time (*Mowrer, 2010*). After all, its future was secure as long as Bethlehem Steel Corporation was operating.

By the 1980s, however, Bethlehem Steel Corporation employed a fraction of the workers that it had 10 years earlier, and the expansive steel company that once ruled the town and had a significant influence on the development of the country was

slowly dying. By the mid-1990s, steel production ceased in Bethlehem; ultimately, the company filed for bankruptcy in 2003. The influence, power, and even dominance that this major corporation had over the city cannot be overstated; its decline and bankruptcy left a significant void in Bethlehem and had an even greater effect in South Bethlehem. Today, South Bethlehem is confronted with an array of challenges all too familiar in many urban settings: crime, limited access to healthcare, public education challenges, poverty, unemployment, and declining economic development.

A Shift in Influence

South Bethlehem's decline became evident to Lehigh University's administration. It was time for Lehigh, situated high on the side of South Mountain, to begin expanding its vision toward the community at the foot of the mountain (*Bauman, 2003*). In 1999, Lehigh engaged Sasaki Associates, Inc. of Boston to develop a campus facilities master plan. A key charge of the plan was developing a strategy for better integrating with the surrounding community and "for addressing some of the issues and opportunities in the neighborhoods on the Southside" (*Sasaki Associates, Inc., 2012, p. 7*). Lehigh recognized that South Bethlehem could develop in a manner suitable for an institution of higher learning only if the town itself played a role. A number of notable initiatives followed that solidified Lehigh's interest in the surrounding community.

A city master plan.

One of the more evident outcomes of Lehigh's work with Sasaki Associates was a collaboration with the City of Bethlehem on the development of a South Bethlehem master plan called Vision 2012 (*Sasaki Associates, Inc., 2012*). The synergy between Lehigh and the city was a critical element of the plan, and community partnerships were the best formula for successful community development. Representatives from Lehigh and the city co-chair the Vision 2012 Steering Committee. The plan set the course for dozens of community improvements, and has recently been renamed Vision 2014 thanks to additional financial commitments by the local private sector through 2014.

A campus square.

One of the greatest visual impacts illustrating Lehigh's transition to a more community-minded way of thinking was the planning and building of the Campus Square complex in 2002

(see Figure 1). Campus Square blended the border of the town and the university by placing 250 student residents, a public parking garage, and a small retail sector that included the Lehigh Bookstore on a section of campus that abuts the city's commercial district. Community leaders had said Lehigh was turning its back on the community since all the buildings constructed in the 1960s and 1970s faced away from the community. Campus Square became a gateway to the community; significantly, it was the first new construction in decades that faced toward the community. That symbolic gesture was a watershed moment in sending the message that the isolationist philosophy at Lehigh University was changing.



Figure 1. Campus Square served as a great transition from the campus to the community when it was built in 2002.

Debit card for use in the local community.

Following the construction of Campus Square, the Lehigh GoldPLUS debit card was introduced for students, faculty members, and staff members to make purchases at merchant businesses outside the Lehigh campus. Local merchants fully embraced the program. Today, Lehigh students' meal plan dollars can be spent in local establishments; over 75 local merchants accept the GoldPLUS card, which introduces close to \$1 million of commerce into the local economy annually.

University innovation and support from the commonwealth.

Universities are known for their innovations and inventions. Creative students, faculty members, and staff members develop myriad ideas, some of which can be translated into practical enterprises. Lehigh University is a model of this, and has pursued economic development opportunities with essential help from state and local governments. For example, in 2004, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania created the Keystone Innovation Zone program as an economic stimulus tool to create jobs and attract technology-based companies to locate near institutions of higher learning and their intellectual resources. Lehigh partnered with the city of Bethlehem, Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Northampton Community College, and other local businesses and organizations to form the South Bethlehem Keystone Innovation Zone—the first such zone in the state. As a result, technology-based companies within the defined boundaries of this zone have access to financial incentives, including internship support and tax credits tied to increased research and development expenses from one year to the next.

Lehigh University experienced the benefit of this jobs initiative early on; the program proved successful in attracting and growing new high-tech businesses in South Bethlehem. The South Bethlehem Keystone Innovation Zone continues to be a leader in the state and was the first program in the state to be awarded additional years of funding because of its success. The tax credits feature of the program is a major stimulus for businesses deciding to locate within the Keystone Innovation Zone. More than \$2.7 million in Pennsylvania tax credits have been received by South Bethlehem companies since 2004, and 27 active companies with more than 150 employees call South Bethlehem home as a result of the initiative.

Just one example is EcoTech Marine, an aquarium-technology company founded by two Lehigh alumni, which was recognized as the 302nd fastest growing company in America and ranked 18 in the category for top consumer products and services companies, according to *Inc.* magazine's 2010 survey of the nation's top 500 and 5,000 private companies (<http://www.inc.com/inc5000/list/2010/industry/consumer-products-services>). Lehigh graduates Tim Marks and Pat Clasen conceived the idea for the company through their participation in Lehigh's Integrated Product Development program, an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to engineering design. They, along with University of Oklahoma alumnus Justin Lawyer, cofounded EcoTech Marine, which has established itself as one of the United States' leading manufacturers of reef aquarium propeller pumps. Revenue jumped from \$343,000 to more than \$3.8 million from 2006 to 2009—the company's first three years of operation.

Other endeavors to support Bethlehem.

In addition to developing new enterprises, Lehigh's partnerships with the city, local businesses, and local organizations were becoming standard practice in the mid-2000s. For example, Lehigh purchased a sidewalk sweeper operated by the city to keep the South Bethlehem commercial district sidewalks clean and presentable. Lehigh's grounds maintenance contractor was assigned to plant and maintain the flower pots in the commercial district adjacent to campus, and Lehigh purchased banners to help the district create an identity. Street festivals and mural projects in the city became part of the local landscape, with Lehigh taking a more active role in these initiatives to help make them part of the community culture. Lehigh was becoming embedded in the community, and the community was responding positively.

Lehigh academic partnerships were also evolving during the mid-2000s. The South Side Initiative was formed in 2007 to bring together Lehigh faculty members, staff members, and students with the people of Bethlehem to share knowledge, foster democracy, and improve the quality of the city. As part of the South Side Initiative, courses have been developed that focus on past, present, and future issues of the city. The initiative supports working groups to conduct research and sponsor events and lectures that inform members of the community on critical issues. In 2011–2012, areas supported by the South Side Initiative's working groups included South Side community gardens and urban agriculture, public history, digital media and documentary film, environmental sustainability, and

public art. The South Side Initiative's community gardens working group is stimulating, coordinating, and supporting a wide range of Lehigh curricular and research projects conducted by Lehigh faculty members and students focused on local and global food systems, hunger and obesity, community gardening, and related public health issues. Ongoing courses include an Integrated Product Development course, co-taught by faculty members in engineering and business, which focuses on infrastructure development for the Lehigh Community Garden and the nearby Broughal Middle School greenhouse. A graduate-level history class worked with the local public broadcasting station to produce documentary films related to the South Bethlehem area. A course in research methods in sociology led to a research project on food insecurity in South Bethlehem, and a summer course on urban architecture featured a civic engagement component that truly fostered a sense of local and global responsibility and citizenship.

A Strategic Plan for Progress

The Lehigh University community was becoming integrated into the local community through programs and initiatives, but the current administration saw the need for a more unified strategic, long-term approach to build on existing efforts. In January 2007, Lehigh initiated a long-term strategic thinking process in order to define overarching institutional goals. The university administration, under the leadership of Lehigh president Alice P. Gast, formed a steering committee charged with asking community members about their vision for the university's future. Hundreds of members of the Lehigh community stepped back from their daily work to consider and discuss the possibilities. The resultant overarching message was that Lehigh needed to move forward as a unified university with integrated plans.

Lehigh also looked outside the campus boundary, and in September 2007, established the South Bethlehem Development Study Group to determine strategic approaches for Lehigh to take in the context of the rapid development occurring in the South Bethlehem region and make recommendations. With steelmaking no longer a part of Bethlehem and the subsequent sale of approximately 1,800 acres of the former steel plant in South Bethlehem, major changes would be coming to the community that Lehigh University had called "home" for more than 140 years.

The former Bethlehem Steel Corporation property is one of largest privately owned contiguous brownfield development

projects in the country, and it represents 20% of the taxable property in the City of Bethlehem (Figure 2). It is a significant parcel on the national scale and monumental to the City of Bethlehem. What had once been a 24-hour, 7 days per week operation of a major industrial manufacturing giant was now being subdivided into commercial, industrial, retail, entertainment, gaming, and mixed-use properties with multiple owners—all within the South Bethlehem Keystone Innovation Zone. The magnitude and nature of this development could be transformational for South Bethlehem, and Lehigh University saw the opportunity to take a leadership role in that development.

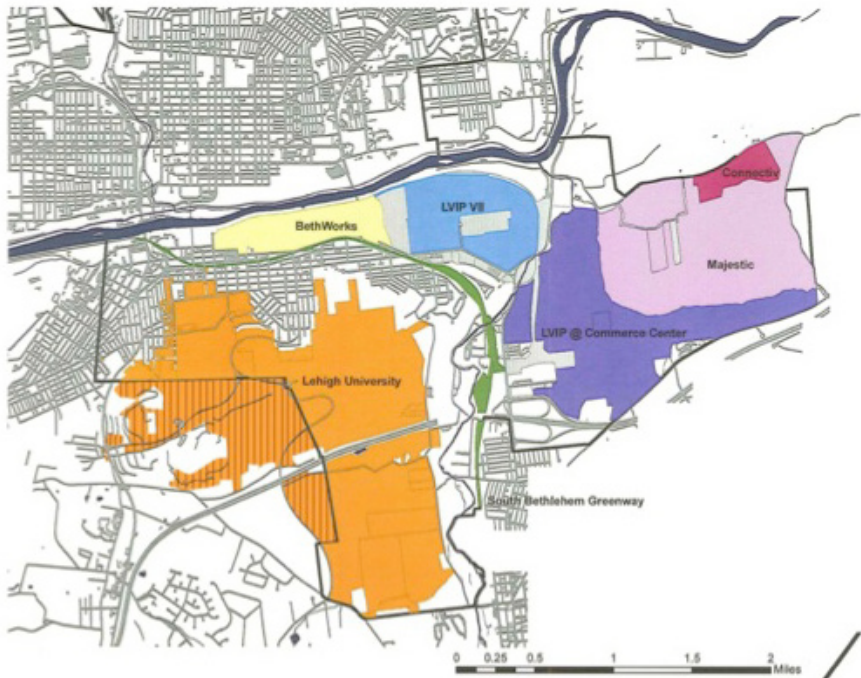


Figure 2. Map of South Bethlehem showing relationship of Lehigh University to the various development projects planned and existing for the region. Note: crosshatched portion of Lehigh University is in Lower Saucon Township.

It became clear throughout the study that what was unfolding in South Bethlehem paralleled some aspects of development in other cities, but at a scale far exceeding that of the changes found elsewhere. The sheer magnitude of redeveloping nearly 1,800 contiguous acres of a former heavy industrial site in an urban setting was unique. That this site had attracted three “billion-dollar”

international developers is testimony to the magnitude of the changes that were beginning to occur. Las Vegas Sands Corporation, a resort company that specialized in casinos, introduced gambling to Bethlehem in 2009 by building an \$800 million-plus casino and hotel complex literally across the street from residential neighborhoods.

In 2007, the Majestic Realty Company, a nationally known commercial realtor based in California, acquired another 440 acres of the site and broke ground on its first building in 2012. A 1,000-acre portion is being developed by a successful, local non-profit commercial developer, Lehigh Valley Industrial Park, Inc. The company brings to this project more than 50 years of experience in six other commercial and industrial parks in and around Bethlehem. The company was formed in 1959 through an initiative of the Bethlehem Area Chamber of Commerce to create an alternative labor force to that of Bethlehem Steel after residents witnessed the significant impact a Bethlehem Steel Corporation labor strike had on the local economy. It is for that reason that placing a high percentage of jobs per acre is built into the Lehigh Valley Industrial Park company covenants in all their parks. Bethlehem was clearly at the forefront of a transformation of the local workforce from a heavy industrial management and labor model to a more diverse business and high-tech workforce.

The South Bethlehem Development Study Group found that no other area adjacent to colleges or universities contained all of these variables, which included the introduction of a gambling casino and upscale retail shops, the mix of low- and high-tech jobs, and the evolving socioeconomic infrastructure. The area was undergoing a significant transformation from a town that was highly dependent on one industry (steel production) into an area that would need to support more diversified business and employment options. It was also clear that the university could play a pivotal role in this transformation, and that the evolution to a thriving business area with appealing neighborhoods was a mutually beneficial proposition. The recommendations of the study were that Lehigh University should

- take an active leadership role in the transformation of South Bethlehem by pursuing an integrated planning process in partnership with local government and community-based organizations;
- re-evaluate its campus master plan, incorporating the changes in vision that were identified as a result of the

strategic thinking/planning process, and taking into consideration all the new South Side planning and developmental information available;

- develop a system to coordinate new and existing community-based initiatives and to cultivate interactions between students, faculty members, and the community;
- develop a three-pronged approach to manage the possibility of problematic gambling among Lehigh University students, faculty members, and staff members, including education, monitoring, intervention, and counseling; and
- continue to foster the relationship between the Lehigh University police and City of Bethlehem police to monitor crime and provide input for staffing and operational decisions. (Aronson *et al.*, 2008)

In 2008, Lehigh University's board of trustees met to discuss these recommendations based on the South Bethlehem Development Study and to formulate the basis for a strategic direction for Lehigh. *Advancing Our Intellectual Footprint* (http://www.lehigh.edu/2009plan/LU_strategicplan.pdf), a strategic plan for Lehigh, was approved by the board of trustees in 2009, and became the strategy for Lehigh's future. The comprehensive plan focused largely on Lehigh's intellectual initiatives; however, playing a leading role in the renaissance of the local community was also a major component of the plan. In response, Lehigh administrators established the framework of four strategic priorities discussed earlier. It is important to point out that the community partnerships and interaction between the university and the South Bethlehem community since the 1990s helped lay the foundation for the four strategic initiatives. The strategic plan set the tone for the entire campus community to embrace community relationships and embed its human and intellectual resources in the community in a way that raised the overall quality of life for the South Bethlehem community. The following sections describe some examples of the Lehigh University-Bethlehem partnership's progress.

Strategic Priority I: A Clean and Safe Environment

The Lehigh University Police Department (LUPD), one of only five campus police forces accredited by the state of Pennsylvania,

works in concert with local police, fire, and community organizations to ensure that South Bethlehem is a safe neighborhood. In 2010, Lehigh formed a cooperative community policing program with the Bethlehem Police Department. The program places officers from the Lehigh University Police Department (LUPD) in the neighborhoods surrounding the university to promote safety and quality of life for Lehigh students, faculty members, staff members, and neighborhood residents. This community policing model relies on partnerships with residents to address issues that give rise to crime and other public safety matters (e.g., noise, litter, parking). The program also assures a more obvious police presence in the neighborhoods where Lehigh students reside.

In 2011, Lehigh implemented a program called Hawk Watch. A neighborhood watch program, Hawk Watch recruits and trains students living in neighborhoods surrounding Lehigh's campus to be cognizant of suspicious activity and to serve as additional eyes and ears for the Lehigh and Bethlehem police departments. Initial interest has been high and the initiative is supported by the student senate. The LUPD reports that students are increasingly more engaged partners in identifying suspicious activity in their neighborhoods and are more aware of preventive safety measures.

Security cameras are becoming more common in urban environments, and Bethlehem is no exception. Bethlehem and Lehigh police have installed multiple cameras on and off campus, and have linked them through a common monitoring system. In this way, the Bethlehem and Lehigh dispatch offices have access to each other's cameras, adding a critical layer of surveillance capability to each office. The success of this type of partnership was demonstrated by a December 2010 incident in which the LUPD and the Bethlehem Police Department apprehended two individuals who had attempted several robberies after tracking them to a residence via surveillance camera.

The viability of the commercial district adjacent to campus is important to Lehigh University. The sustained period of economic instability that followed the stock market crash in late 2008 continues to exert a negative influence on many of the district's merchants. Although the overall appearance and feel of the district is evolving, there is still room for improvement. Lehigh is dedicating human and financial resources in a joint effort with the city and local property owners to form a neighborhood improvement district that will provide cleaning and security ambassadors for the district to create a positive identity. In addition, Lehigh plans to make capital improvements to enhance the appearance of

the district. It is hoped that business attraction and retention efforts will keep the district fully occupied. Similar clean and safe commercial districts have been successful in communities across the state, such as West Chester, Lancaster, and Manayunk.

Strategic Priority 2: Support of Public Education

An important focus in any neighborhood revitalization project is educating the neighborhood's youth. A foundational underpinning of the community school approach is that schools, by themselves, cannot address all the needs of today's students. The community school movement makes this concept real by placing family support services in health, employment assistance, and adult education right in the school. Next door to Lehigh University, the Broughal Middle School has built a space precisely for this mission (*Quinn & Dryfoos, 2009*).

Broughal Community School.

In the Broughal Middle School, Lehigh College of Education faculty members and graduate students put theory into practice. Lehigh is working with the Bethlehem Area School District, candy manufacturer Just Born, Inc., and the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley to create a university-assisted community school at Broughal Middle School in South Bethlehem. The College of Education and its Center for Developing Urban Educational Leaders has taken responsibility for the management and measurement of the after-school programs that are focusing on improving the students' academic preparation. As a community school, Broughal benefits from a model designed to meet the specific needs of its students. Academic support and enrichment programs, coordinated tutoring, the creation of special interest groups, coordinated health and wellness, and enhanced parent education are hallmarks of the Broughal community school environment. The "ribbon tying" ceremony for this new partnership took place in 2010; the first year has resulted in improved student attendance, increased participation in after-school programs, and reduced disciplinary action. The results are indicators of improved academic achievement.

A similar program was introduced at the Donegan Elementary School on Bethlehem's South Side in October 2012. It is the fifth community school in the Bethlehem area and the second to be associated directly with Lehigh University.

South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center.

The South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center provided a safe educational environment for South Bethlehem schoolchildren to receive help through afterschool homework clubs. When the economic climate forced the center to refocus its resources in 2009, Lehigh stepped in. Lehigh's Community Service Office (CSO), which had been providing training for student leaders and tutors, assumed management of the entire program. Today, the CSO operates homework clubs for three area schools. The school students participating in the program not only receive the help and guidance they need, but are also exposed to a path that could lead them to college. Lehigh sophomores are paired with sixth graders in a mentoring program so each mentor-mentee pair will graduate the same year. Working side by side with college students who are themselves succeeding in an academically rigorous environment, the younger students are forming relationships with positive role models.

Community Outreach by Athletes who Care about Helping (C.O.A.C.H.) program.

Lehigh student-athletes contribute to Bethlehem's public education through the Community Outreach by Athletes who Care about Helping (C.O.A.C.H.) program. Student-athletes dedicate time to local students to inspire them to succeed in school and in life. The program was founded in 1991; in 2009, the program joined forces with Donegan Elementary School and St. Luke's Hospital Partnership for a Healthy Community to create the Reading Rocks program. During the school year, approximately 50 Lehigh students regularly participate in the Reading Rocks after-school program, spending time each week at Donegan to read, play games, and forge friendships. The program helps middle and high school student-athletes and their peers make informed choices regarding their education, drug and alcohol use, and other issues. Lehigh student-athletes act as "coaches" by making presentations, offering education-themed sports clinics, sponsoring group outings to Lehigh athletic events and facilities, and other activities.

Strategic Priority 3: Commercial Vitality

Based on a recommendation in the South Bethlehem Vision 2012 plan, the city secured funding to purchase space and build a linear park along an abandoned Norfolk-Southern railway line that weaves through the commercial and residential neighborhoods of South Bethlehem. When complete, the 60-foot-wide park with a

paved path and lighting will run more than two miles through South Bethlehem, from the Bethlehem Union Station to Saucon Park. The city was looking for partners to enhance the park, now known as the South Bethlehem Greenway. Lehigh took “ownership” of three blocks of the Greenway that run through the commercial district by pledging human and intellectual capital, along with \$225,000. It was a natural partnership due to the proximity of the section of the Greenway to the Lehigh campus. Lehigh administrators believe that the partnership will have a positive impact by encouraging commercial vitality.

Lehigh engaged students in its Integrated Learning Experience program to develop ideas for this section of the Greenway. Students in the program come from a variety of academic backgrounds, including civil engineering, architecture, and economics. For the Greenway project, they interviewed residents and community business owners and drafted a report with architectural renderings that could be included in a grant proposal. Among the improvements considered were a community garden, a playground, outdoor classroom space, and art and performance space that were designed to create a sense of “place” on the Greenway.

In 2012, Lehigh began working with the city and the landscape design company to take the preliminary plan that was drafted by students to final architectural plans and construction drawings. In addition, the South Side Initiative has collaborated with the city, the Banana Factory (a local art organization), and Vision 2014 to introduce native plantings around a new sculpture that was dedicated in 2012 in this “adopted” section of the Greenway. The native plantings should provide a low-maintenance environment for this extensive park, something the city parks department advocates. It is hoped that these types of partnerships will inspire local businesses, organizations, and other private entities to collaborate with the city to improve other sections of the Greenway.

Strategic Priority 4: Neighborhood Revitalization

This fourth strategic priority, neighborhood revitalization, is being developed. Lehigh has made strides in partnership with the city of Bethlehem to improve the quality of life in areas adjacent to campus where many university students live by introducing enhanced security, addressing litter and noise nuisances, building community gardens, and more. Lehigh’s work with neighboring schools serves to improve the educational opportunities for the community youth. Lehigh’s support of the local economy helps

those in the neighboring community that work locally. The university upgraded its Mortgage Assistant Program, which provides forgivable loans up to \$10,000 for Lehigh employees who purchase and live in a home proximate to campus. The purpose of the program is to encourage home ownership, and therefore, neighborhood stability in the community near campus.

Neighborhood revitalization, however, calls for a much more comprehensive plan. In 2012, Lehigh began working with a consultant to develop a comprehensive facilities master plan that incorporates a strategy for meeting the goals of neighborhood revitalization to effect a renaissance of the local community as stated in the university's strategic plan. To this end, Lehigh's planners have met with city and school district officials, community organizations, and local developers to understand how they are thinking about South Bethlehem in order to incorporate that thinking into the facilities master plan. They had informative conversations concerning student housing options, additional partnership possibilities, and current development opportunities. As the university considers accommodating future student housing needs or incorporating some of its programs and operations at off-campus sites, the needs of the community will definitely be a part of the decision process.

Conclusion

Through efforts such as the construction of Campus Square, the creation of myriad community and academic partnerships, and the development of a strategic plan to engage positively in community development initiatives in South Bethlehem, Lehigh has brought a new level of excitement to the campus and community alike. Lehigh is no longer that reclusive institution of higher education sitting quietly on the side of Bethlehem's South Mountain. Lehigh's leadership recognizes that in order to fulfill its mission of teaching, research, and service, the university needs a thriving community. With major business contributors and the urban landscape constantly evolving, it is now the responsibility of anchor institutions, such as Lehigh University, to work with state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations to provide the necessary support and to create partnerships that can work toward the collective goals of the community. The transition will take time, but the direction established in a strategic process will ensure that ongoing dedication to the community will continue beyond the university's current administration and board of trustees.

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Educating for Community Change: Higher Education's Proposed Role in Community Transformation through the Federal Promise Neighborhood Policy

Elizabeth Hudson

Abstract

This study investigated a federal comprehensive community initiative, the Promise Neighborhood initiative, in order to understand higher education community engagement in an embedded context. Promise Neighborhood programs aim to create a place-based system of family and education services that can support youth from early childhood through college access and career. Through a qualitative analysis of the 21 Promise Neighborhood awardee applications nationwide, the author concluded that higher education institutions commit to these partnerships in four ways: mission-related practices associated with teaching, research, and service; capacity-building practices, including teacher training and community leadership development; programs and services, including direct community services; and administrative functions, such as grant management. Many of these functions in university-community partnership intersect with contributions related to university missions. Exploring higher education–community engagement from the perspective of community goals offers insight into practices related to universities' and colleges' civic mission and potential as anchor institutions.

Introduction

 Over the last decade, higher education involvement in communities has been increasingly framed as part of a movement. At the same time, it is criticized as driven by institutional need, with potential to privilege diverse aims of higher education institutions over community needs (*Cruz & Giles, 1999; Maurrasse, 2001*). Comprehensive community initiatives, such as the federal Promise Neighborhoods, offer a broader lens to investigate higher education community involvement. Acting among many partnering organizations in communities, higher education institutions offer unique contributions to a change process. The Promise Neighborhood initiative aims “to take an all-hands-on-deck approach to lifting our families and our communities out of poverty” through a network of community organizations (*U.S. Department of Education, 2010*). In the ideal partnership, higher education institutions are embedded community partners, meaning

that they function as part of a system of solutions to deeply rooted community challenges.

Models of Higher Education Community Engagement

Institutions of higher education are embedded in their communities, and thus have responsibilities to engage their neighbors as productive institutional citizens (Boyer, 1996; Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999; Dubb & Howard, 2007; Maurrasse, 2001; Smerek, Pasque, Mallory, & Holland, 2005). Boyer (1996) is often cited for igniting an institutional movement in community engagement through his articulation of the “scholarship of engagement,” which called for higher education to become a “vigorous partner” contributing to solutions for the “most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems” (p. 18). When he wrote this more than a decade ago, he saw higher education institutions falling short on this aim.

Recently scholars have increased efforts to model and, thus, encourage the engagement practices of higher education in communities. Ostrander (2004), in her influential multi-case study, finds three dominant rationales for community engagement in higher education institutions: pedagogy, encouraging civic outcomes of educating students; theories of democracy, enhancing grassroots theories of democratic participation that can be accomplished through community organizing and partnerships; and the application of knowledge, supporting the change needed within the institutions of society to achieve a more inclusive and effective democracy. The motivations to engage in relevant ways with community are multiple, and to be successful in creating effective relationships, institutions need to cultivate institutional engagement at multiple levels. Jacoby (2009) grounds institutional practice of civic engagement in higher education’s mission, asking colleges and universities to form their responsibility to the community based on their “unique mission, culture, and traditions” (p. 10). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching allows institutions to assess their involvement with communities with its Community Engagement elective classification, and this has become an influential driver of engagement practices. More than 300 institutions hold this classification, and the applications offer an in-depth profile of institutional engagement guided by foundational indicators, such as institutional identity and culture; curricular indicators, such as service-learning and tracking student outcomes; and outreach and partnership indicators, such as sharing of resources with the community and structures for community feedback (Carnegie Foundation, 2006). Another round of elective classifications is planned for 2015.

Anchor Institutions

Many models of higher education engagement can be critiqued as promoting higher education and community engagement as completely separable ends unto themselves, or for considering these goals exclusively in terms of how they serve institutions. Models of engagement often start from the institution. Weerts (2011) offers an insightful criticism from the perspective of university advancement. He argues that if higher education tied its engagement to broader community goals, it would struggle less to demonstrate relevance and thus would frame its work more competitively, enabling institutions to position themselves to receive public funds. An alternative frame for understanding higher education is the “anchor institution” approach, which highlights how higher education institutions operate in their locations, seeking economic development ends. Cantor (2009) argues that an anchor institution is characterized by “designing and giving substance and solidity to the kind of inclusive community and democratic culture that befit a diverse society” (p. 9), and doing so contributes to a “civic infrastructure” that she argues can “make a difference” and “create a pipeline of inclusive human capital for the future” (p. 9). She emphasizes that projects at Syracuse University built in accord with this concept are large, collaborative, and cultivate the “entrepreneurial spirit” in communities (p. 9). Harkavy (2006) enhances the anchor approach by promoting a specific way in which universities should engage with the community—through schools. He writes, “The goal for universities, I believe, should be to contribute significantly to developing and sustaining democratic schools, communities and societies” (p. 7). He argues that the work of a civic institution cannot be severed from the community. A relationship is necessary to further the democratic mission of higher education.

Axelroth and Dubb (2010) highlight three primary roles of higher education institutions as they “consciously apply their long-term, place-based economic power in combination with their human and intellectual resources, to better the long-term welfare of the communities in which they reside” (p. 3). They find that an anchor institution can serve as a facilitator, leader, and convener. Anchor institutions participate in community development activities as *facilitators* when community development projects have limited funding, and relationships with higher education institutions play a strong role due to funding constraints. Higher education institutions acting as *leaders* often become engaged in community in response to crises. For example, they may work to improve local conditions to prevent crime. Finally, anchor institutions serve as *conveners* when they make strategic choices to engage, and work in nonadjacent neighborhoods where “universities view the

community as co-participants in leadership and agenda setting and give significant focus to building community and resident capacity” (p. 11).

These models offer several ways to understand higher education community involvement from an institutional perspective, and an anchor institutions approach broadens the institutional thinking from considering how community involvement serves its mission or how to create institutions that can engage, to understanding how higher education engages toward an end. Thinking about how higher education operates toward a specific goal in community, such as improving opportunities for youth and families in a neighborhood, can deepen our understanding of engagement and how colleges and universities can be expected to operate as anchor institutions.

Promise Neighborhood Program

In 2010 the U.S. federal government launched a grant program called the Promise Neighborhoods, which aims “to improve significantly the educational and developmental outcomes of children in our most distressed communities, and to transform those communities” (*Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2010, p. 24671*). The federal government has funded several one-year planning grants with a special focus on “breaking down silos” and creating information-sharing opportunities across institutions and organizations; this planning phase of the program looks to build bridges across existing programs and services, while building a system that supports youth.

This system was modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone, a neighborhood revitalization program in Harlem with an education-based approach to community revitalization (*Tough, 2005*). Community partners banded together to apply for the Promise Neighborhood grants, and in order to qualify they submitted lengthy application packets, which included abstracts, detailed program narratives, and memoranda of understanding among key organizations. Applicants to the 2010 Promise Neighborhoods were nonprofit organizations, including faith-based partners, or higher education institutions. The applications needed to be partner-based and define a specific region, with at least one school in the designated neighborhood.

During the 2010 initiation year, the federal government allocated \$10 million to create 20 \$400,000–\$500,000 one-year planning grants. The allocated funds are less than 1% of the federal education budget, but the Promise Neighborhood program has lofty aims of sharing data across community organizations to more

seamlessly serve youth from “the cradle through college to career” (*Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2010, p. 24671*). Additionally, these one-year planning grants prepared communities to compete for three-year implementation grants in 2011, in annual amounts of \$4 to \$6 million, to support the planned structures and programs.

The applications were scored by anonymous peer reviewers along six dimensions: need for the project, quality of the project design, quality of project services, quality of personnel, quality of the management plan, and the program’s significance. Establishing need and the project design center on a continuum along two dimensions: (1) academic program indicators, and (2) family and community support indicators. The core academic indicators include early learning, moving through proficiency in core subjects and middle school transition, and then on to high school and success in college. The family and community support indicators include health, safety, stability, family and community engagement in learning, and education technology. Higher education institutions were not required partners in an initiative, but the “cradle-college-career” continuum of education and community partnerships encourages a range of roles for higher education.

Research Questions

Because of its focus on broad systemic neighborhood change and the potential for higher education institutions to support these partnerships, the Promise Neighborhood Initiative creates an opportunity to closely examine colleges’ and universities’ diverse practices as anchor institutions—in other words, the process through which these institutions serve as anchors in their communities, and what contributions they are expected to make. This study explored the Promise Neighborhood applications to understand higher education’s role in community development through a primary research question: In education-based, community models of transformation, what are the proposed functions for higher education institutions?

Method

The purpose of this study was to understand how higher education institutions are expected to contribute to proposed collaborative, neighborhood-wide change initiatives and what that means for an embedded, anchor institution framework for higher education engagement. I employed qualitative analysis of the 21 Promise Neighborhood awardee applications. In this section, I describe the awardees, the data, and my approach to analysis. I also include potential study limitations.

Promise Neighborhood Awardees and Data Sources

In September 2010, 21 organizations were designated Promise Neighborhood planning grant recipients from a pool of 339 applicants (see Table 1). The one-year awards ranged from \$400,000 to \$500,000 and served a range of neighborhoods across the continental United States.

Table 1. Promise Neighborhood 2010 Planning Grant Awards

Neighborhood	Location	Lead Organization	Neighborhood Population
Appalachian	Clay, Jackson, and Owsley Counties, Kentucky*	Berea College	42,900
Arlington	Lawrence, Massachusetts	Community Day Care Center of Lawrence, Inc.	14,700
Athens	Georgia	Athens-Clarke County Family Connection, Inc.	100,000 (34,000 students)
Atlanta	Georgia	Morehouse School of Medicine, Inc.	40,000
Boston	Massachusetts	Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative	22,753
Boyle Heights	Los Angeles, California	Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission	97,000
Buffalo	New York	Westminister Foundation	11,000
Cheyenne	Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Montana**	Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Cheyenne Nation	7,280
District of Columbia	Washington, D.C.	Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter High School	7,000
Delta	Indianola, Mississippi*	Delta Health Alliance, Inc.	12,066
Gulfton	Houston, Texas	Neighborhood Centers, Inc.	53,754
Harlem	New York City	Abyssinian Development Corporation	14,651
Hayward	California	California State University East Bay Foundation, Inc.	73,259
Los Angeles	California	Youth Policy Institute	32,007
Little Rock	Arkansas	University of Arkansas at Little Rock	24,592
Main South	Worcester, Massachusetts	United Way of Central Massachusetts	Not available ¹
River Rouge	Michigan	The Guidance Center	8,321
San Antonio	Texas	United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County	11,476
St. Paul	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Amherst H. Wilder Foundation	22,150
Sunset Park	New York City	Lutheran Family Health Centers/ Lutheran Medical Center	Not available ²
Universal	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	University Community Homes	50,000

* rural program **tribal program

The Promise Neighborhood awardee application abstracts, narratives, memorandums of understanding, and reviewer feedback were publicly available on the Department of Education's website. Compiled, these applications constitute more than 1,800 pages of relevant text with the potential to describe higher education institutions' proposed roles in these planned neighborhood transformation efforts.

The applications and accompanying documents serve as compelling texts to understand higher education engagement for two reasons. (1) Higher education institutions were approximately 20% of the successful Promise Neighborhoods applicants for planning grants, and among the final awardees several lead organizations were higher education institutions. (2) An explicit goal of the program is community transformation by improving educational opportunity through college and career, so a strong motivation (and incentive) exists for higher education institutions to partner.

Approach to Analysis

The applications were reviewed individually to acquire descriptive information about the communities, partnership designs, and stakeholders. From the applications, I compiled information across the awardees about the neighborhoods and partners, including the population; number of partners; the type of organizations; the characteristics of the higher education institutions involved, including student population, institutional structure, and Carnegie Classifications; and the higher education areas of involvement along the continuum of community change for the program. I then identified the institutional level of involvement—in other words, whether the involvement was departmental, individual, or school- or university-wide. The level of the signing partner within higher education institutions was an important indicator of the level of involvement (where applicable).

Once relevant information about the diverse partners—with special emphasis on the higher education institutions—was identified, I coded the applications to flag passages framing higher education involvement and the expectations of these partners in the Promise Neighborhoods. The proposal narratives and memoranda of understanding yielded the most relevant data about higher education partnerships. Within the application information about higher education, I qualitatively analyzed these excerpts, resulting in themes relevant to engagement practices within the partnerships, as well as practices relevant to higher education involvement and expectations based in the neighborhood change efforts.

This is similar to the constant comparative method employed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). I read and reread the applications, coding them based on themes relevant to models of partnership. I then revisited these emergent codes, connecting them back to the points of analysis outlined above.

Trustworthiness was accounted for by attending to additional supporting documents and researcher triangulation. By following press reports about the Promise Neighborhood initiative, I could follow shifting trends. I also triangulated the application data by visiting partner websites. These supporting documents gave context and depth to my understanding of the partnerships and higher education institutions' involvement. Additionally, during the coding process, the coded institutional practices were shared with another advanced researcher for triangulation. When disagreements emerged, the codes were deliberated until agreement could be reached, and the findings were then coded appropriately.

Limitations

Although hundreds of communities applied to be Promise Neighborhoods, only the 21 awardees are represented in this study, limiting its scope. Additionally, these applications may not reflect *actual* practice in community, as they articulate a plan and agreements about future grant-dependent practice. However, the selected Promise Neighborhood applications represent exemplary cases in partnership, recognized through a peer review process determining their federal financial support. They are worth examining closely for this reason alone. They reflect reviewers' expectations of what successful partnership configurations and practices would be. Other researchers have effectively employed an externally defined exemplary case selection method to explore community engagement, resulting in significant contributions. O'Meara (2007) used this sampling approach to understand faculty motivations, and Ostrander (2004) used "excellence" as a case identification strategy in her work to understand the civically engaged campus. I am careful to note that these applications do not represent the practice of higher education partnership (which is often more complicated than any plan). Rather, they represent expectations from community members and nationwide peer reviewers about what a successful community transformation plan would entail.

Additionally, limitations could result because, although it is a comprehensive community initiative, the Promise Neighborhood program has the explicit aim of improving schools. This is certainly not the only leverage point for engaged scholarship in higher education, nor should it be. Because of the program's educational aims,

these partnerships could be particularly configured in some ways to best meet this goal. Within the confines of this limitation, this study could still serve to inform partnerships aimed at improving practice with this end in mind.

Findings

Analysis of the roles of higher education institutions in the Promise Neighborhood applications³ shows a wide range of practices for higher education in communities that support colleges' and universities' potential to create wide-reaching community transformation systems. In this section, I highlight how higher education institutions were planned partners in the aggregate across the Promise Neighborhoods and then offer analysis of the diverse roles and functions higher education institutions potentially play in these partnerships.

General Roles of Higher Education in the Promise Neighborhoods

Overall, higher education institutions were heavily involved in the Promise Neighborhoods. Approximately 44 unique institutions were outlined as partners to serve multiple functions within the 21 designated neighborhoods. Three higher education institutions were lead organizations serving to administer the grant (Berea College, the Morehouse School of Medicine, and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock), and one nonprofit foundation to improve a higher education institution also led a Promise Neighborhood (California State University East Bay Foundation). The remaining 40 institutions served multiple roles, including as a signing partner in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or as a peripheral or planned future contributor to the Promise Neighborhood. They were public and private institutions, varying in size, mission, and proximity to the neighborhood.

The Specific Functions of Higher Education Across the Promise Neighborhoods

The application data indicate that higher education contributions to the Promise Neighborhoods fall into four primary categories: capacity building, programs and services, mission-related contributions, and partnership-maintaining contributions (see Table 2). Collectively, the Promise Neighborhoods included roles for higher education across every aspect of the cradle-to-college-to-career continuum⁴, as well as many roles that were not emphasized in the formal Promise Neighborhood program outline.

Table 2. Functions of Higher Education Across the Promise Neighborhoods

Mission Based Contributions		
	Building campus branch Data expertise/research Student human resources	
Capacity-Building	Programming & Services	Partnership Maintenance
Cultural capacity	Adult education	Administrative
Early childhood training	College access/readiness programming	Convening
Health professional training	Dual enrollment	Planning
Neighborhood leader and organization capacity	Early childhood programming	
School improvement	Other youth programming	
Sustainability		
Workforce capacity		

Capacity-Building Contributions

The capacity-building elements of the Promise Neighborhoods are those potential contributions to systemic solutions that add value to the neighborhood through training and development. Higher education institutions contributed to developing an underlying structure of institutions, organizations, and individuals working toward long-term success of the initiative—and the neighborhood. Across the partnerships, higher education institutions committed to building the neighborhoods' capacity by strengthening early childhood education training, improving schools, developing neighborhood leadership and organizational capacity, contributing to a cultural change, emphasizing sustainability, and building workforce capacity (see Table 3).

Table 3. Higher Education Capacity-Building Contributions by Function

Culture Building	Workforce Capacity	Early Childhood Training	Leadership/ Organizational Capacity	School Improvement	Sustainability
Chief Dull Knife College	Delta State University	Athens Technical College	Houston Community College	Chief Dull Knife College	Temple University
Colleges of Worcester Consortium	Los Angeles Mission College	Bank Street College of Education	Trinity University	College of Visual Arts	
	Los Angeles Valley College	Los Angeles Valley College	University of Arkansas at Little Rock	CUNY-Brooklyn College SOE	
	Quinsigamond Community College	UDC-Community College		Teachers College at Columbia University	
				Trinity University	
				UCLA	
				University of Arkansas at Little Rock	
				University of Georgia College of Education	
				University of Minnesota	

Cultural contributions.

Another social aspect of the Promise Neighborhood capacity-building efforts by higher education institutions involved supporting the promotion of local culture in the community. Chief Dull Knife College (CDKC) eloquently describes its contributions to the Cheyenne Promise Neighborhood Application, sharing its vision through a

prediction from a nineteenth century Northern Cheyenne leader, Chief Dull Knife . . . “We can no longer live the way we used to. We cannot move around no more the way we were brought up. We have to learn a new way of life. Let us ask for schools to be built in our country so that our children can go to these schools and learn this new way of life.” It is the mission of CDKC to provide Northern Cheyenne culturally influenced education through quality life-long learning opportunities. CDKC’s activities include building a “college-going culture” within each school in the neighborhood and dual enrollment opportunities through Montana State

University (Bozeman and Billings) and University of Montana. These activities align with the [local partnership] in developing and supporting a college-going culture; opportunities for children in the neighborhood to pursue a higher education; and preparation of children for a career.

The role of tribal colleges to support a “college-going culture” is an essential component of the Cheyenne Promise Neighborhood. Other neighborhoods, however, also incorporate higher education institutions to mark this important cultural capacity. The Worcester College Consortium emphasizes in the application narrative their orientation to the “awareness of college culture and expectations” across its organization member programs, especially as they influence the ambitions and potential for first-generation college students.

Workforce capacity.

Workforce capacity refers to labor force development aligned with positions in local industries, such as health or technology. The institutions supporting this role were all associate’s-degree-granting institutions. Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) (in Worcester, Massachusetts), through the Boston Advanced Technological Education Collaborative (BATEC), created a series of “interactive workshops to increase awareness and promote Information Technology careers. QCC is committed to run a second series as part of our community building solutions in the [Promise Neighborhood].” Los Angeles Valley College pledged that its “Job Training Office will work with the program to plan for implementation of job training services for parents and community residents in high wage and stable fields such as health care.” These institutions have dedicated their efforts to doing what community colleges already do, but focus specifically in this target area, and cooperate with information-sharing efforts within the Promise Neighborhoods.

Early childhood training.

Associate’s-degree-granting institutions also contributed to early childhood training efforts. For example, Bank Street College of Education contributes to “supporting professional development for preschool teachers.” District of Columbia Community College (affiliated with University of the District of Columbia) elaborates the contribution it will make to the DC Promise Neighborhood:

In partnership with the Community College of the District of Columbia, [the DC Promise Neighborhood] will offer Child Development Associate classes, as well as AA- and BA-level child development courses at the nearby Educare facility, which offers a state-of-the-art training room and observation windows into its care-giving environment.

At least four associate's institutions aligned with these efforts to better train for early childhood in communities.

School improvement.

The school improvement efforts, which accounted for a large majority of higher education involvement, primarily focused on improvement in the classroom through evidence-based instruction techniques and professional development. For example, Trinity University, working in the San Antonio Promise Neighborhood, aims to “Explore implementation of evidence based practices to improve low performing schools; [and provide] professional development support, designed to enhance teacher and administrator effectiveness and the use of evidence-based curricula, to all Eastside K-12 campuses and the Tynan Early Childhood Center.” Similarly, Teacher’s College aims to “Strengthen Professional Learning Communities in schools to promote faculty use of its student data to drive instruction and understand the impact of its curriculum on student learning.” The majority of these institutions are master’s- or research-level higher education institutions. Only one of the higher education partners—of nine total—planning to contribute in this way is an associate’s-granting institution: Chief Dull Knife College plans to “collaborate via a local Circle of Schools initiative led by CDKC and aimed at increasing k-12 academic performance—particularly, in reading and math.”

Leadership and organizational capacity.

Neighborhood leadership and organizational capacity building was also articulated through institutional dedication to cultivating the assets in the community—local people and stable organizations. For example, the Gulfton Promise Neighborhood Planning Council, an advisory board, will include two students from Houston Community College: “one traditional age and one adult.” These students would be drawn from the community. Another institution, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, goes deeper into leadership development in the community by running “Neighborhood

Leadership Academy . . . [and] numerous neighborhood associations, both existing and recently formed,” which “have become increasingly active.” They also contribute to nonprofit organization development through the Institute of Government, which is “focused on improving the quality of government and nonprofit agencies in Arkansas.” The Institute of Government’s “faculty and staff have years of experience providing high quality public policy analysis, applied research, and management training to local organizations.” Alternatively, Trinity University articulates a more general “community engagement” commitment in the neighborhood.

Sustainability.

The only higher education institution that articulated a contribution to the long-term financial planning for the initiative was Temple University (in Philadelphia). It stood alone with this unique contribution from higher education to the long-term success of the neighborhood.

In sum, the capacity-building commitments of higher education institutions planned in these partnerships reach across the neighborhoods involved. These efforts are intended to strengthen the neighborhood, to educate residents, and to provide long-term structures for success in the neighborhood. Partnerships of this category were planned to overwhelmingly focus on school improvement—a primary goal of the Promise Neighborhood initiative. By strengthening teacher education programs to support early childhood and schools, higher education institutions could make significant contributions to the long-term success of the neighborhoods. Higher education institutions also aimed to build capacity along social dimensions, by such means as building an educational culture, improving community leadership, and increasing local workforce capacity through various forms of training. Only in one case, however, was a higher education institution expressing dedicated energy toward ensuring the initiative’s long-term financial sustainability.

Programming and Services

Higher education institutions also planned contributions in the Promise Neighborhoods that would work directly with youth and adults through programming. In the planning-grant applications, higher education institutions support the Promise Neighborhood continuum of solutions through academic and college-access programming, adult-education programs, early-childhood programming, dual enrollment efforts, and other forms of programming that reach beyond formal education (see Table 4).

Table 4. Higher Education Institutions as Program and Service Providers in the Promise Neighborhoods

Academic and College Access Programming		Early Childhood Programming	Adult Education	Other Youth Programming	Dual Enrollment
City College of New York-College NOW	Los Angeles Valley College Mississippi	California State University-Northridge	Athens Technical College Mississippi Delta	California State University-Northridge	Chief Dull Knife College Wayne County
Gainesville State College	State University	California State University East Bay	Community College	Houston Community College	Community College
Georgetown University	Extension Mississippi	Houston Community College	Quinsigamond Community College	State University of New York at Buffalo	
Ward 7 Initiative	Valley State University	Los Angeles Mission College	State University of New York at Buffalo	University of Arkansas at Little Rock	
Northern Essex Community College	Trinity University	Quinsigamond Community College			
Piedmont College		Roxbury Community College			
State University of New York at Buffalo		University of California-Los Angeles			
University of Georgia College of Education		Worcester State University-Latino Education Institute			
University of Massachusetts-Boston					
University of Massachusetts-Lowell					

Academic and college-access programming.

The majority of higher education commitments across Promise Neighborhood programming involve postsecondary access or academic strengthening programs. However, some proposed or existing programs specifically develop around college access or college knowledge, while others focus on performance in specific academic subjects, such as the STEM fields or literacy.

For example, the Athens Promise Neighborhood aims to include existing academic programs from Athens Technical College, University of Georgia, Piedmont College, and Gainesville State University. In the DC Promise Neighborhood, Georgetown University’s Ward 7 Initiative supports the partnership “through staff and student-run literacy programs, academic support services and college preparation programs, as well as faculty and course initiatives. . .” SUNY Buffalo also offers a wide range of educational programming services tied specifically to the institution’s mission and college access:

The State University of New York at Buffalo vision is to enlarge not only its school's enrollment from within Buffalo and outside, but also its potential to attract top-flight faculty and researchers in order to regenerate the economic future of the region. This will enable UB to address specific needs of the community and mobilize resources and opportunities that strengthen academic preparation and college access. UB is committed to accelerated learning opportunities that expose, excite, educate, and engage youth in the STEM pathways (science, technology, engineering, and math), college preparation workshops and resources including SAT prep, college application boot-camps, mentoring, tutoring, and related support.

These SUNY Buffalo programs are all directly related to youth service in educational access.

Early childhood programming.

Early childhood programming is available for youth and families in many Promise Neighborhoods, and in some it is a service that higher education institutions may contribute to support the Promise Neighborhoods. This is another service offered primarily by many associate's-degree-granting institutions in direct service to youth. For example, Northern Essex Community College in Lawrence, Massachusetts offers "on-site childcare for low-income and at-risk children from the neighborhood." In the Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood, the Los Angeles Valley College's Child Development Department commits its Family Resource Center to

work with the partnership to develop services to be implemented that include Parent and Baby play sessions, parenting workshops, family social events; a baby clothing exchange; a private lactation room with refrigerator; prenatal support groups, information and community services; referrals from agencies for "at risk" babies; specialized training programs in high demand areas such as infant and toddler and special needs.

Not all institutions committed to early childhood development services are associate's-degree-granting institutions, however. In the Delta Promise Neighborhood, Mississippi State University Extension and Mississippi Valley State University both align

their commitment with early childhood services, although less specifically.

Adult-education programming.

In a few Promise Neighborhoods, higher education institutions were proposed as partners to improve educational opportunities for adults as well as youth transitioning to adulthood. The only higher education institutions that considered roles in adult education were associate's-granting institutions, and their offerings differed from the capacity-building workforce development efforts by emphasizing support structures for success, dropout programming, or GED support and programs. Quinsigamond Community College (QCC), Delta Community College, and Athens Technical College each planned to reach out to adults, parents, and high school dropouts, committing to serve the neighborhood directly through existing initiatives or practices related to their mission. For example, in the Main South Promise Neighborhood (Worcester, Massachusetts) the

College partner, QCC, has recently implemented the Shining Light Initiative, which seeks to advance educational opportunities among adult Worcester residents. The MSPN is one of the target areas of this initiative, as QCC strives to recruit and ensure the persistence of underrepresented populations who seek to pursue higher education.

Similarly, in the Delta Promise Neighborhood, Delta Community College commits to “workforce training in the region, which will be utilized in the training of high school dropouts and GED learners, as well as parents.” A similar plan exists for Athens Technical College in the Athens Promise Neighborhood, which “contributes GED programming and adult basic education opportunities” in the partnership.

Other youth programming.

Additional youth programs offer a range of services tied to youth betterment, but which are not necessarily tied to specific academic- or school-based goals or college access. Higher education institutions contribute to these through neighborhood programming in the arts, safety, health, and youth employment. For example, California State University at Northridge commits

programs at the College of Arts, Media, and Communication to the LA Promise Neighborhood⁵:

College of Arts, Media & Communications performs for and works with youth and adults in the San Fernando Valley with programs ranging from classical to popular genres in the visual and performing arts. Art programs include: Faculty and student recitals; Matinee Series for the K-12 audiences; Art Exhibitions; Shakespearean Plays; Choral and Orchestral Performances...

University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), working in the Central Little Rock Promise Neighborhood (CLRPN), also lists existing programs as contributing to partnership goals, in this case through health and dental services: "UALR Children International (CI) provides in-school health and dental screenings for students in all three CLRPN elementary schools." They tie their existing programs specifically to the schools in their Promise Neighborhood, however. In the Gulfton Promise Neighborhood (Houston, Texas), Houston Community College contributes to developing youth employment possibilities by "develop[ing] an asset-based youth apprenticeship and employment program based on identified best practices in the field."

Dual-enrollment programming.

Two Promise Neighborhoods included dual-enrollment programs. They are both through associate's-degree-granting institutions, Wayne County Community College and Chief Dull Knife College (CDKC). The two institutions approach this commitment differently, however. In the River Rouge Promise Neighborhood, Wayne County Community College commits to "dual enrollment for high school students and strategies for supporting students in their transition to college and throughout college." In the Cheyenne Promise Neighborhood, CDKC commits explicitly to dual enrollment partnerships with four-year institutions: "[A]ctivities include . . . dual enrollment opportunities through Montana State University (Bozeman and Billings) and University of Montana." These are different approaches to dual enrollment, one offering higher education credits while in high school, and the other easing the transition from two-year to four-year institutions.

Partnership-Maintenance Contributions

The partnership-maintenance contributions to the Promise Neighborhoods refer to how higher education institutions aim to strengthen the relationship functions among partners or at the administrative level for the partnership. The roles outlined in this partnership include administration, convening and partnership, and planning (see Table 5).

Table 5. Higher Education's Partnership-Maintenance Contributions to Promise Neighborhoods

Administration	Convening & Partnership	Planning	
Berea College	Clark University	California State University East Bay	Berea College
Clark University	Loyola Marymount College	Chabot College	City University of New York-Brooklyn College School of Education + Brooklyn Center
Morehouse School of Medicine	University of California-Los Angeles	Georgetown University	Little Big Horn College
University of Arkansas at Little Rock	University of Southern California + USC Medical School	Northeastern University	Morehouse School of Medicine
		University of Arkansas at Little Rock	Trinity University
		University of Massachusetts Boston	Tufts University
		University of Southern California + USC Medical Center	University of District of Columbia/DC Community College

Administration.

As would be expected, some of the articulated commitments from each of the three higher education institutions serving as lead organizations on the planning grants are captured in this section, as leading the Promise Neighborhood requires attending to the process of partnership. Berea College, for example, notes in the memorandum of understanding its intention to “work with the undersigned partners to refine the project plan, timeline for implementation and partner responsibilities.” Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) commits to a collaborative approach:

Through a collaborative approach, the MSM/UWMA Partnership will develop a plan that builds a continuum of solutions in *Atlanta's Promise Neighborhood* through a process that cultivates resident leaders, school partners, and community partners to increase the community's capacity to deliver seamless supports and services that

positively affect the academic outcomes and the well-being of children and families.

Administrative contributions were entirely by lead organizations. This process-focused commitment ensures that the work is carried out according to the proposal. For example, University of Arkansas at Little Rock pledged that:

being the lead partner in this collaborative effort . . . , as such, agrees to coordinate and contribute to all aspects of this project during the planning year as described in the application narrative submitted to the Department of Education's Promise Neighborhoods Program.

The functions associated with administrative duties include fiscal management and coordination of the partnership. This is different from planning and convening, as it deals more with administrative or managerial functions than with simply bringing people together (convening) or taking part in the plan of the neighborhood.

Convening and partnership.

Convening and partnership roles involve bringing other organizations or groups together in the partnership. Clark University (Main South Neighborhood in Worcester, Massachusetts), UCLA, Loyola Marymount, California State University Los Angeles, and USC & USC Medical Center (Boyle Heights Promise Neighborhood) all promised to contribute to the convening and partnership process. The institutions in Boyle Heights commit to "cooperative relationships." Additionally, in the Main South Neighborhood, the "Main South Neighborhood Revitalization Committee (NRC) convening [will be] supported by Clark University Entrepreneurship Program." These roles imply intermediary functions that create a structure of organizational relationships or commit to being part of a structure that aims to contribute to neighborhood success.

Planning.

A large number of higher education institutions are making "planning" commitments. The descriptions of these commitments are in most cases less substantive than those for any other category, as "planning" contributions are the minimum required by the grant. These commitments to planning took many forms, including committing expertise to a specific workgroup area as part of the structure of the partnership. District of Columbia Community

College makes a specific commitment in the memorandum of understanding:

We will provide a .20 FTE in-kind facilitator to manage the agenda, activities, and products of the results-driven work group on “High school graduates obtain a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential.” The value of this contribution is \$20,000.00.

In the Hayward Promise Neighborhood, both Chabot College and California State University East Bay commit to “Ensure [their] programs help build a continuum of solutions to the [Promise Neighborhood]” and participate in the “education and development task force.” On the other hand, planning commitments could also be much vaguer. Northeastern University and University of Massachusetts at Boston (Dudley Street Promise Neighborhood) are outlined as “partners in planning process,” and that is the only time they appear in the application. The extent of their commitment is unclear from this entry.

Mission-Based Commitments

The term *mission-based commitments* refers to those associated specifically with what the university is already known to do: essentially, its mission of teaching, research, and service (see Table 6). This sense of the mission, however, is taken broadly to align more with the sense of scholarship expressed by Boyer, as it cuts across discovery, engagement, teaching, integration, and application (1990, 1996). These commitments included committing human resources to the partnership in the form of staff hours or student participation in service-learning courses and projects. These commitments also include expertise supplied by researchers, students, or consultants. In most cases, this expertise takes the form of faculty or student commitments to provide needs assessment, data alignment, or segmentation analyses within the Promise Neighborhood. In one unique circumstance, an institution committed to opening a campus branch in the proposed Promise Neighborhood (Worcester, Massachusetts).

Table 6. Higher Education's Mission-Based Contributions to Promise Neighborhoods

Research Expertise		Student Resources		Campus Branch
California State University East Bay	City University of New York-Brooklyn Center	Colleges of the Worcester Consortium	Berea College	Quinsigamond Community College
Chabot College	& School of Education	Morehouse School of Medicine	California State University East Bay	
Clark University	Mississippi State University Extension	University of California-Los Angeles	Chabot College	
Morehouse School of Medicine	Stanford University-John Gardner Center		Clark University	
Temple University	Tufts University		Trinity University	
Trinity University	University of the District of Columbia/District of Columbia Community College			
University of California-Los Angeles				
University of Arkansas at Little Rock				

Research expertise.

Additionally, higher education institutions can make substantial contributions to these partnerships because of their research demands. Several research requirements in the Promise Neighborhoods, such as segmentation analyses, needs assessments, and data alignment, are practices that faculty are already performing and are well-qualified to contribute in this area. Sixteen institutions provided this type of support to the Promise Neighborhoods, but in different ways. As mentioned previously, Trinity University contributes to the segmentation analysis for San Antonio Promise Neighborhood through student and faculty contributions. UCLA's Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing will collaborate with a faculty member in the School of Public Affairs in the Department of Urban Planning to do the same in the LA Promise Neighborhood. The local evaluator in the Boyle Heights Promise Neighborhood is in the UCLA School of Education and Information Studies, and the evaluating faculty member will "help [the lead organization] connect with college and high school students who can also support our data process." Trinity is also responsible for an "impact analysis," which is a quarterly assessment shared with the Advisory Board. The higher education partners in the Hayward Neighborhood contribute to the partnership by sharing information. The number of students from some high schools in remediation from California State University East Bay and Chabot will inform the partnership

as an indicator for school success. The DC Promise Neighborhood includes efforts by DC Community College to develop “a way of tracking vocational and other industry-related certificates.”

In the LA Promise Neighborhood, UCLA’s “Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing” is primarily committing to needs assessment. The center plans to “conduct separate needs assessments on the communities of Pacoima and Hollywood to assess the appropriate mixture of services that is required to improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children in these two individual communities.” The Morehouse School of Medicine will also contribute a director of needs assessment to the Atlanta Promise Neighborhood.

A few of the higher education partners frame their potential role as consultants; in University Promise Neighborhood (Philadelphia), Temple University frames its role as “data consultants and support” through several faculty and staff in research. Also through the Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicators Project, the university aims to support “data management, collection, and analysis activities.” The consultancy relationship is also evident in the Sunset Park Promise Neighborhood, where CUNY plays significant roles: “As consultants to the project, the Center for the Study of Brooklyn staff resources will include the Director, Senior Research Associate, Research Associate and Research Assistant (project budget of \$60,000).” In this role, they

will facilitate strategic planning, a community needs assessment and produce supporting data analyses and reports—including graphical and mapping presentations where relevant—to ensure that both students in the target school and other children in the neighborhood have access to a continuum of solutions that improve educational and developmental outcomes.

The CUNY School of Education contributes to the partnership in this capacity as well. “Because of the dynamic needs of the initiative, consultation services will be provided by a variety of faculty and staff, based on the identified need.” University of Arkansas at Little Rock aims to collaborate with the Little Rock Promise Neighborhood through its Institute of Government because of its “experience conducting longitudinal surveys that require tracking individuals over time.” It will work with the “Sustainability Team” toward developing “the longitudinal data system during the course of the planning year.” In the Delta Promise Neighborhood,

Mississippi State University will contribute to improving data systems through a specific initiative through “First Impressions, a program housed at MSU designed to help Delta communities assess and improve their community and economic development potential.” In the Dudley Street Promise Neighborhood (Boston), Tufts contributes to the evaluation of the initiative in that two committed faculty members can “bring expertise in evaluative research and related methodologies, GIS, policy and legal analysis, and statistics.”

Student resources.

Students served a range of roles in the partnership, and often the role of students had not yet been identified. Eight institutions (not including the Worcester Consortium, which also makes such commitments) commit their students to the initiative. Students were often identified as serving through specific existing initiatives. For example, in the District of Columbia, Georgetown’s students will commit through “student-run literacy programs.” Undergraduate and graduate students at Clark University will support Main South (Worcester, Massachusetts) through community development and education programs. Morehouse students will mentor in Atlanta, and they will contribute to other areas of the “continuum of solutions.” The Boyle Heights Promise Neighborhood mentions UCLA as an example for what they have done in the past, and what they plan to develop for the initiative: “UCLA students and faculty have provided us service-learning courses and a community education and resource initiative.” Finally, the Colleges of Worcester Consortium commits its Collegiate Success Institute to the partnership, which pairs high school students with college-age mentors. In one case (Trinity University in the San Antonio Promise Neighborhood), students were committed to helping with the segmentation analysis.

Institutions also make general commitments to the partnership through service-learning, but those commitments are not directed toward specific ends. Or, in the case of Berea College in the Appalachian Promise Neighborhood, the institution commits to growing the partnership through leadership that will “stimulate student and scholarly interest.” This vague mission-based language appeared in other applications as well, such as in the Hayward Promise Neighborhood, where two institutions, California State University at East Bay and Chabot College, commit to service-learning with no specificity.

Campus branch.

As mentioned previously, in one unique circumstance an institution committed to opening a campus branch in the proposed Promise Neighborhood (Worcester, Massachusetts). Quinsigamond Community College had committed in the planning period to opening an institutional branch in the proposed Promise Neighborhood to better serve the area.

Discussion

This study explored the proposed role of higher education partners in the Promise Neighborhood planning models to transform communities. In practice, higher education institutions are seen to have potential as anchors in their communities to serve many functions in a change process. Theoretically, the role of higher education institutions can be conceptualized as part of a broad and inclusive community-change process, which forces institutions to push beyond theorizing organizational and institutional community engagement driven by higher education ends. The Promise Neighborhood proposal narratives represent the plan to create a plan. And investigating across those proposals demonstrates a substantial amount of possibility for the contributions that higher education institutions can make to their communities. In fact, taking a community-wide perspective on the potential role of higher education serving a neighborly function, these institutions have a wide range of roles in the Promise Neighborhoods. Although much of the overall vision has not been built yet, the proposals show the foundation that they could be built upon, and give an understanding of how community organizations and individuals within and outside higher education can work together for community improvement.

This study shows how a richer, anchoring concept of higher education partnership can add dimension to our conception of services that higher education partners can offer in a community. Starting from the community and looking at what higher education can offer shows versatile, rich missions aligned with multiple dimensions of institutional citizenship where institutions can “consciously apply their long-term, place-based economic power in combination with their human and intellectual resources, to better the long-term welfare of the communities in which they reside” (*Axelroth and Dubb, 2010, p. 3*). The Promise Neighborhood program has community revitalization aims through education, and it makes contributions across the breadth of cultural, social,

and economic areas. The program serves to build interest and value in educational outcomes, develops the workforce, and contributes to long-term change in the community by being an institution that can bring people to together. The value of any individual function in a neighborhood can vary, but taken collectively, higher education can add value through a wide range of contributions.

It is important to understand how these institutions serve their communities to align with their historical missions of research, teaching, and service, but this analysis also gives a glimpse into how they can be valued in communities in ways that extend those roles and make contributions to building the long-term capacity of a neighborhood, serve as a place where people can be brought together, and provide necessary services. In some places all of these functions may be necessary for higher education, but in others, the strongest higher education contributions may be mission-based contributions. The community ends must be continually reflected upon, and higher education institutions must reflect on their own potential to make contributions in partnership with other institutions and organizations in the community.

Contributing to the long-term sustainability of these community development efforts, higher education institutions plan to provide programming, build capacity, maintain relationships in the community, and fulfill mission-related responsibilities. These functions can be related directly to existing teaching, service, and research initiatives, but are not always indicated as such. Considering this, higher education's tripartite mission can be better framed through the expansion of engagement and understood as connected to community functions. Institutional representatives—faculty members, administrators, and students—have been doing community partnership work for a long time, but programs like the Promise Neighborhoods can embed the institution more deeply and deliberately in local communities (see Figure 1). In partnership, it is clear that higher education institutions are expected to do more to become relevant in the community realm, and they are trying to embed themselves more deeply as community partners—through specific or general commitments—as more incentives arise to construct change processes with communities.



Figure 1. Higher Education Contribution Model for the Promise Neighborhoods

This research also has implications from the practical perspective of neighborhoods implementing a comprehensive community initiative. First, if considering an education-based initiative, it is evidenced in the partnership proposals just by the number of institutions and the diverse roles they play that higher education institutions are perceived as pivotal partners in comprehensive community partnerships for education. Although they need not be central to the partnership, they can serve several functions to streamline a “continuum of solutions,” such as the efforts of community-based partnership. Higher education institutions demonstrate potential capacities to administer community-based programs and community-focused grants; they can smooth transitions through the education pipeline.

Finally, it is worth noting that in these Promise Neighborhoods, different types of higher education institutions can be better aligned with some needs than with others. Associate’s-degree-granting institutions could be looked to for a diverse set of roles within the community regarding workforce and early childhood capacity building and programming. In some cases, however, they acted without other higher education partners, with the possibility that some needs were not being met. The same concern could be raised about the partnerships in which higher education institutions

served as lead partners, usually without recruiting other colleges or universities to participate. Higher education institutions are not the only organizations that can perform capacity-building functions in communities, but several of them do. Overall, 18 different institutions made contributions in building various capacities in communities. Although many of them went along with their educational mission, by doing so in target areas and building structures to support youth and families, they extended their efforts beyond simply teaching to creating themselves as educational institutions with contributions to make.

Higher education institutions have considered their civic engagement mission in narrow terms based on the tripartite goal of teaching, service, and learning. Along these lines a host of innovative projects, partnerships, and practices are associated with a civic mission of higher education inside and outside the classroom. The civic engagement movement in higher education institutions is often associated with developing students' civic skills and practices, but it has also been put forth as a way to better understand partnership through the institution's capacity to demonstrate civic practices as a good neighbor with its locale. A comprehensive approach to community change, such as that encouraged through the Promise Neighborhood program, offers a broader vantage point for understanding the potential for higher education community practice, and encourages the development of a broader sense of possibilities for higher education's civic mission. At the same time, the civic capacity building in communities was but one small contribution of higher education institutions in the Promise Neighborhoods. This could show limits to institutions' civic capacity functions, and thus to their conceptualization of a civic mission. Investigating the ways that community practices of higher education interact with its traditional mission adds necessary depth and dimension to the potential of higher education institutions acting as anchors—but deeply embedded ones—in their communities.

Endnotes

1. The population totals for the neighborhood of "Main South" are not given in the Worcester application materials, though the application does offer the city population total at approximately 170,000.
2. The population totals are not given in the Sunset Park application materials. The application speaks about the population in percentages, but does not offer numbers. The U.S. Census indicates that in 2000, the population of this

neighborhood (as defined by two zip codes in the application) was approximately 120,000.

3. In this analysis, I rely heavily on evidence found in the 2010 Promise Neighborhood applications. To improve readability, quotes from these documents are specifically attributed to the application document, but they are not formally cited in references. They are treated as data rather than as sources. For verification the applications are publicly available in full text at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/2010/grantees.html>.
4. The continuum is specific language employed by the U.S. Department of Education to describe the alignment plan for this partnership. It plans to align services for youth from infancy through career. The continua have two foci: one on alignment of education services, including schools and supplemental services, in order to smooth transitions and improve opportunity along the pathway, and one that includes family engagement and health indicators for youth in the neighborhood.
5. The inclusion of arts programming in this miscellaneous category isn't to devalue the important intellectual contributions of these programs, but rather to differentiate them from programs specifically tied to a school curriculum.

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Service-Learning: Some Academic and Community Recommendations

Robert F. Kronick and Robert B. Cunningham

Abstract

Civic engagement, service-learning, and university-assisted community schools are strong forces in making universities, as anchor institutions, engaged and responsible within their spheres of influence. By helping solve social problems, universities engage in the highest form of learning, come to understand social issues and problems, and escape the problem of inert knowledge, knowledge that is valuable only in a classroom.

Preface

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the term “anchor institution” emerged as a new way of thinking about those institutions most likely to become engaged in solving urgent central city problems and in grappling with the broader issue of urban development (*Luter & Taylor, 2013*). This line of thinking dovetails with the engaged university (*Bok, 1982*), civic engagement (*Kronick, Dahlin-Brown, & Luter, 2011*), service-learning (*Kronick, Cunningham, & Gourley, 2011*), and university-assisted community schools (*Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007; Kronick, 2005*).

The term “eds and meds” (i.e., educational and medical institutions) was coined by Geruson (1994), who stated that the unique resources available to eds and meds provide them with the potential to become catalytic change agents with the power to trigger the revival of cities. He also saw these institutions as immobile. Fulbright-Anderson, Auspos, and Anderson (2001) said that anchor institutions “have a significant infrastructure investment in a specific community and are therefore unlikely to move out of that community” (p. 1). Indeed, most scholars, policy makers, and practitioners consider spatial immobility in central cities the prime characteristic of anchor institutions. Invested capital is highly correlated with the immobility of anchors, so these institutions have a strong economic stake in the health of their communities (*Harkavy & Zuckerman, 1999*). Harkavy and Zuckerman (1999) posit that the term, “anchor institution” arose because they are large, place-based institutions that are not likely to move out of cities. Examples include higher education, local foundations, and the United Way (*Luter & Taylor, 2013*). Anchors are generally considered permanent

fixtures in their physical location. Luter and Taylor (2013), however, point out that there is not total consensus on the mobility level of anchor institutions.

An engaged university movement has continued to evolve over recent decades. The engaged university evolved through the proliferation of various civic strategies, such as service-learning and university-assisted community schools. Service-learning changed the roles of teachers and students. Engaged universities have begun to transform universities and communities. Students became experts because of their involvement with community members (e.g., vulnerable students and families) and universities became enmeshed with the community, working to solve problems, instead of acting as ivory tower intellectuals. Dewey (1902) has described solving problems as the highest form of intelligence, and Lewin (1935) has stated that the best way to learn about something is to try to change it. These approaches to dealing with communities are reflected in the strategies of engaged universities.

Introduction

As crucial anchors in their surrounding communities, institutions of higher education bring myriad resources that can address the many pressing challenges facing localities. The engagement of institutions of higher education in their communities is most effective and sustainable when it is tied to institutional mission (Maurrasse, 2007). As teaching and learning are central to the core mission of colleges and universities, it is critical to link institutional engagement to these activities. Service-learning is one prominent way that institutions of higher education have created opportunities to simultaneously enhance communities and improve student learning.

Service-learning can be defined in numerous ways. Items on the following list reflect descriptions of service-learning in the literature.

1. Service-learning challenges the status quo.
2. Service-learning is a problem-solving instrument of social and political reform.
3. Students (may) become agents of social change in service-learning.
4. Service-learning struggles with issues of idealism and individuals.

5. Service-learning, and by extension service-learners, sees needs.
6. Service-learning is connected to an academic course and requires integration, reciprocity, and reflection.
7. Service-learning balances service and learning.
8. Service-learning includes sensing, reflecting, and acting.
9. Service-learning is a point on a continuum from volunteerism to internship learning.
10. Service-learning attempts to answer the question, whose side are you on? (*Kronick, Cunningham, & Gourley, 2011*)

Kronick, Cunningham, and Gourley (2011) developed a framework for service-learning that focuses on sensing, reflecting, and acting. This model is intended to increase understanding of the potential and challenges of service-learning. Kronick, Cunningham, and Gourley explicate the significance of sensing, feeling, and acting:

Experiential learning arises from experience and returns to experience. It can be conceptualized as a cycle incorporating sensing the environment, reflecting on the sensed information, and testing the accuracy of one's reflections. (*p. 121*)

The learning cycle commences with *sensing* the environment—accumulating disparate bits of information by attending to what one absorbs from seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, or tasting. To sense, one attends to the specific: entering concrete situations, absorbing new information, or looking at old information in a new way.

In *reflecting*, one ponders what has been sensed, then distills the experiences into patterns, theories, or principles for action. Reflection turns experience into learning (*Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985*). Reflecting on what one has experienced is necessary to progress upward along the learning spiral. Reading, listening, and discussing help the learner link sensed experiences to general principles.

Acting tests reflections. Acting is for the manager what theory-testing is for the scientist. Reading or thinking cannot substitute

for action. Reading about management is different from implementing management. The practicing manager is constantly acting. For the scholar, “acting” may not involve dramatic arts or the public arena, but writing and exposing one’s reflections to the marketplace of scholarly ideas in books and journals, and at academic conferences (Kronick, Cunningham, & Gourley, 2011).

Although sensing, reflecting, and acting are conceptualized as distinct stages, the learner can engage all stages simultaneously, or shift randomly among the stages. The teacher facilitates movement across these stages. The teacher’s role in the experiential learning process is to present an initial situation for sensing, to ask students to study and reflect on that initial situation, to challenge each student to distill theories or principles from that situation that can be applied to analogous situations, and to allow students an opportunity to practice their learning in new situations.

To mimic the experiential learning model in the classroom requires that the student carry out assignments, then reflect on the information presented in order to distill principles or theories for action. Practicing the theories or principles in the classroom setting or society at large allows a spiraling of the learning process to a higher level of understanding (Kronick, Cunningham, & Gourley, 2011). For example, Robert Cunningham, a professor of political science at the University of Tennessee, has put political science/public administration students into service-learning experiences where they learn something about the people for whom they want to create bills, policies, and laws that will influence their lives. Experiential learning, including sensing, reflecting, and acting, minimizes the possibility that knowledge gained is inert, useful in a classroom only (Whitehead, 1929).

Discussion

Benson et al. (2007) and Kronick, Dahlin-Brown, and Luter (2011) describe a major portion of service-learning that is done through a university-assisted community school. The University-Assisted Community Schools initiative is centered at the University of Pennsylvania’s Netter Center. The work is based on the philosophy that the university has a major role in preparing teachers and shaping K-12 education. The central idea of community schools is to turn public schools into full service centers that are hubs of community life (Kronick, 2005). One cannot solve the problem of underperforming schools without simultaneously solving the problems of distressed urban neighborhoods (Benson & Harkavy, 2000).

In the university-assisted community schools model, the resources of anchor institutions are applied to enhance the potential of community schools to fulfill their comprehensive intentions. Service-learning has been an important component of this approach.

John Dewey's philosophy of education shapes what occurs in a university-assisted community school. Elsie Clapp's application of Dewey's philosophy in West Virginia and Kentucky influences the Netter Center's work in West Philadelphia, a vulnerable community and home to the University of Pennsylvania (Penn). In 2010, Penn was voted the most collaborative university in the United States by the Corporation for National and Community Service in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Education. The university received this award in 2008 and 2012 (*J. Weeks, personal communication, February 28, 2013*). Penn's mission specifically calls for a commitment to civic engagement. The Netter Center, along with Civic House, interfaces between Penn and West Philadelphia.

Service-learning may attempt to change conditions that lead to social problems, such as lack of access to health care, discrepancies in education, homelessness, unemployment, and myriad others. Service-learning can take a social structural approach looking for root causes and invoking a Parsonian (1951) understanding of systems, or an individual approach that teaches children to read. An emphasis on the first may lead to no action being taken. An emphasis on the second may lead to victim blaming and "band-aiding."

Students face many challenges as they engage in service-learning. These challenges include social class and race differences, defining the problems, and changing conditions that they experience, as well as making a good grade in the service-learning class. By definition, students have to be in a class; hence, grades are part of the process.

In the University-Assisted Community School at the University of Tennessee, students often know more about the children they encounter than anyone else at the university. This insight positions students to become change agents. Resistance from the host organization, in this case a school, is in many instances a given, complicating the change agent role. Students as change agents must deal with parameters set by their course as well as organizations, communities, or individuals with whom they work. As change agents, students must recognize power differentials as well as the

tendency to impose programs rather than work with those being served. Often programs fail because the people receiving the service neither want nor need it, and they have not been consulted regarding the offered programs.

Macro-level ideals may inform service-learning, but in practice, many service-learning projects have an individual rather than a systemic impact. Efforts aimed at individuals, such as students who need help with reading, may cease upon success at an individual level, such as once the child starts reading. Situations like this do not generally address the multiple causes that explain why children cannot or do not read. It seems that both approaches are valuable in today's society.

Service-learning begins with an identified need. For the University-Assisted Community Schools program at the University of Tennessee, the needs are non-curricular, such as food, shelter, and clothing. The lack of these necessities has impeded student learning. Once the service-learning begins, additional needs are certain to surface, making service-learning circular rather than linear. In this program, university students are discovering new needs daily. Currently, mental health services are the predominant need for the children, families, and communities being served. The idea that mental health services must be termed *behavioral services* for families to use them is an example of practical information that can be learned only from field experience.

Service-learning that focuses on needs may invoke social justice as a driving force. Social justice has the learner take a side, and that side is with vulnerable populations (i.e., people of color, women, low-income people). As anchor institutions, colleges and universities can establish the context for service-learning. Engaged institutions committed to transforming communities can encourage service-learning to strive for lasting impact in communities. This context provides institutional support for effective service-learning courses.

Service-learning should be connected to a course that stresses integration, reciprocity, and reflection. *Integration* refers specifically to the integration of theory and practice. Rather than being at the head of the class, the professor becomes a co-learner with the student. The student, by being in-field, may know more of what is going on than the professor. It is the professor's obligation to integrate the material students bring to class into theoretical models. This arrangement also introduces the student to inductive learning and qualitative research as ways of learning. This aspect of

service-learning applies to multiple disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, and theology. Concepts from each of these disciplines are presented here as examples of applying service-learning in the respective fields.

- Psychology—Behaviors that are reinforced will continue and be strengthened. In urban, Title I schools associated with the University of Tennessee’s University-Assisted Community School program, behaviors are often punished with little or no reinforcement. Service-learners may reinforce behaviors that teachers and staff often miss or choose not to reinforce.
- Sociology—In the looking glass self model, persons get a sense of who they are from others’ reactions to them. Self-concept may be positively influenced by service-learners when they use the looking glass self *positively* (Cooley, 1922).
- Anthropology—In becoming aware of ethnocentrism, service-learners are taught the importance of knowing their own culture when they begin to serve others. This first step will then help ensure that the service-learner does not consider his or her attitudes, skills, knowledge, and values superior to those of the persons he or she serves.
- Economics—Human capital becomes social capital as service-learners interact with those who have less human capital than they. Those who are being served want the same things and often have the same goals as those who have greater levels of human capital. What they lack are socially approved opportunities to acquire human or social capital. The key is to reach culturally approved goals through socially approved means, and to act as change agents rather than create temporary solutions (Merton, 1957).
- Political Science—This discipline cannot be separated from economics. The policy process is not only affected by economics, but in turn will affect it. In doing service-learning, the service-learner will become acutely aware that those with power make decisions for those who do not have power. Some contend that a power elite is making decisions regardless of the arena (i.e., education, criminal justice, housing). It is imperative

that service-learners not become a tool of this power elite (Mills, 1960).

- Theology—Volunteerism or mission work is often guided by a holy book like the Bible, the Koran, or the Torah. Service-learning, in contrast, is often guided by such sources as contemporary theologians Martin Buber and Thomas Merton. Buber (1970) speaks of God in personal terms, like “I-Thou” as opposed to “I-It.” Merton’s numerous writings may be used to guide volunteerism or missionary work. Theologians have guided many counseling theorists such as Carl Rogers and William Glasser.

Jonathan Kozol provides examples of attitudes, skills, and knowledge that can be taught and learned in a service-learning course. Remembering that service-learning begins when problems are identified, his works define problems in America. *Savage Inequalities* (1991) describes radical differences in schools based on socioeconomic status and race. His discussions of diversity are illuminating. He interviews teachers who describe their schools and believe that having taught three White children in 15 years qualifies as diverse. His discussion of the Supreme Court case *Rodriguez v. Texas*, a 5-4 decision that left school funding as it was, exemplifies structural explanations of school discrepancies in pupil performance. Kozol’s works can inform service-learning courses of needs that can be dealt with by service-learners, especially *The Shame of a Nation* (2005), *Amazing Grace* (1995), and *Letters to a Young Teacher* (2007).

Several researchers (Benson et al., 2007; Dryfoos, 1994; Kronick, 2005; Walsh, Brabeck, & Latta, 2003) write about full-service community schools and university-assisted community schools as hubs of communities and one-stop shops for needed services for children, families, and communities. The expanded vision and mission for schools developed by these authors are excellent avenues for implementing service-learning strategies. Reflection as a key facet of service-learning courses can be refined through journaling and through reading Robert Coles’ *The Call of Service* (1993). Coles begins his reflections by sharing his Catholic parents’ views on service. At Harvard, Coles exchanged ideas with luminaries such as Erik Erikson and Anna Freud. He was most affected by Dorothy Day, a Catholic worker who ran soup kitchens in New York, who told him he could learn more from her guests (clients) than he could from his professors, and William Carlos Williams, M.D., the

physician and poet who told him to “learn what you can where you can” (*cited in Kronick, 2005, p. 6*).

Purposeful inclusion of integration, reciprocity, and reflection should make for a sound service-learning course. The professor’s academic discipline will shape how the course evolves. If service-learning is to be part of a course, the nuances will vary and the community component of the course will have to be clearly explained to the community. Service-learning may be a course in and of itself, with a free-standing curriculum or it may be a part of a course, permeating across the curriculum. Additionally, the academic discipline of the professor will influence the course, and whether the course is a service-learning course, or a course with a service-learning component. There will be variation within service-learning courses based on instructional values, such as one taught by a psychologist and one taught by a professor of agricultural economics. A service-learning course differs from a non-service learning course in that the professor may no longer be the expert because students in the class may know more of the experiences in the field than the professor does. This in no way excuses the professor from being active in the field. Structurally, the professor is no longer in the front of the classroom, but rather, becomes a co-learner with the students.

Service-learning is a developmental process that ranges from volunteerism to internship learning. These stages are easily recognized by those working in the human services (i.e., social work, psychology, counseling).

Service-learning may help students in the human services by giving them pre-practica or pre-internship experiences. For other students, service-learning may help them better understand themselves. At universities such as the University of Pennsylvania, service-learning courses have evolved into academically based community service courses (ABCS). These service-learning courses raise their institutions to the level of civically engaged universities. Through courses of this type, universities such as Penn, University of Buffalo, University of Dayton, Boston College, and University of Oklahoma–Tulsa are moving toward becoming civically engaged universities.

One question that must be answered at the beginning of the service-learning partnership is whether the community wants or needs the university involved in its problem solving. In May 2008 at the Coalition of Community Schools Biennial meeting, this issue was addressed by Dick Ferguson (University of Dayton),

Pam Pittman (University of Oklahoma–Tulsa), and Joann Weeks (University of Pennsylvania), who composed the panel for a discussion titled, “Tapping the Assets of Higher Education.” This panel addressed topics that are critical for universities as anchor institutions. The following points of discussion are especially relevant to university-assisted community schools, service-learning, and the university’s role in solving problems. Keep in mind that John Dewey stated the highest form of intelligence is the solving of social problems (*Benson et al., 2007*).

According to Ferguson, Pittman, and Weeks (2010), questions that must be answered include:

- Is the university a widely trusted community builder with history?
- Does the university have leaders, faculty, and staff whose roles seem to fit the project?
- If necessary, can the university participate with its own resources at least, or add resources at best?
- What does the university promote?

These are important questions regarding the civic engagement of universities as anchor institutions. Service-learning can become an essential vehicle to connect universities to communities. From our personal experience of 40 years each, the university and its faculty and staff may often go in different directions. In some cases faculty members have used communities for their own ends and moved on. Universities may not be forgiven for the “sins” of their athletic department, or may be viewed as miserable stewards of the property they own. In terms of citizenship, university history may be spotty at best. Beginning with the president, the leadership at the University of Pennsylvania has worked diligently to reverse the trend of poor citizenship by the university in West Philadelphia. University-assisted community schools are excellent examples of continued support from faculty and staff.

Resources, broadly defined, can be provided by the university, including resources in the form of human capital. Financial capital is another matter entirely. State universities may not have the requisite financial capital to invest in human service enterprises. However, they can hire people from the community and do business with those who operate within its environment.

Universities promote teaching, research, and service. Generally, it is the research that is rewarded. Service-learning can entail all three areas of scholarship. Engaged faculty members doing

service-learning are less likely to burn out and will find new ways to teach that will excite the students and themselves. If the university promotes the tenets of civic engagement and service-learning expressed in this article, it can be an anchor within its region and beyond.

Suggestions to Enhance Service-Learning

This article addresses issues regarding service-learning. The following is a concise set of lessons learned.

- Make contact with community resources the semester before the course is offered. This will take more time than the instructor may realize. This time constraint will diminish each semester.
- Realize teaching strategies for service-learning courses are different from those for other courses. Co-teaching and co-learning between faculty and students is the norm.
- Keep in mind that the course will change some students in major ways.
- Some students do not keep their service commitments. Thus, a system of attendance and accountability is a necessary component of the course.
- Students from majors such as science and engineering are more comfortable with linear thinking than with the inductive thinking that occurs in service-learning courses.
- Be prepared for the unexpected.

Conclusion

An anchor institution is a large and/or significant institution that has special importance to the remaking of a city and its future. An anchor institution has a special reason to want to be instrumental in shaping its city's future (*Maurrasse, 2007*). It is with this sentiment in mind that this article on service-learning and university-assisted community schools is set. The University of Tennessee's current University-Assisted Community Schools program will at some point move beyond a hub of services co-located at a school. The program will move toward redesigning the community so that all parties buy into the community and want to make it a place where all want to be. The goal is for the community

to become a village that includes all children and families in its life, economically, politically, socially, and religiously.

Benson and Harkavy (1991) and Taylor (1992) aver that schools and communities must change concomitantly. Kronick (2002, 2005) places programs where the needs are the greatest. In the university-assisted community schools program discussed in this article, 90% of students in the community are on free and reduced lunch, and the student mobility rate is 50%.

In 2002, Kronick wrote about Billy Dahlgren, a student in a service-learning course who went considerably beyond the course requirements. The term the *Billy phenomenon* was coined to capture this experience. In the past 10 years, many students who have read about this phenomenon have acted to become a “Billy,” moving beyond their service-learning course requirements. Authentic relationships depend on a commitment to one another that extends beyond the last day of class (Kronick, Cunningham, & Gourley, 2011).

This article concludes with a quote from James Birge. The quote addresses the pragmatics of getting a service-learning course off the ground and doing service-learning. He also warns of ignoring the aesthetics of service-learning.

Much of the expansion of service learning practice is due to the multiplicity of conferences, workshops, training sessions, publications, and consultants that focus on the pragmatic elements of integrating community service and academic study. These pragmatic elements include such things as syllabus design, reflection activities, assessment devices, partnership development and activities etc. (Birge, 2005, pp. 202–203).

We must keep in mind as we forge our way along in this business of service-learning that the episode may be finished as the semester ends, but the important work is never really done.

Sit Finis Libri
Non Finis Quaerendi
(T. Merton, 1948)

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The mission of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* is to serve as the premier peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal to advance theory and practice related to all forms of outreach and engagement between higher education institutions and communities.

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