

THE CHRONICLE  
of Higher Education®



# The Campus as City

**Crucial strategies  
to bolster town-gown  
relations and run a thriving  
21st-century institution**

# Quality OF Life

IT'S WHAT WE DO.

From campuses rooted in the center of a major city to an insulated college town, universities have something in common across the world, they are metropolises full of life, interconnected by people working hard to better themselves and the world around them. Just like cities that are measured by the quality of life they offer their citizens, from housing and livability to recreation and security, modern campuses are held accountable in the same way. In fact, the campus environment is a determining factor when choosing to attend or stay at a university. Sodexo has observed that in addition to the core set of criteria by which students and faculty measure an institution, such as academic and financial factors, there is also a web of touchpoints that shape the campus experience ultimately driving satisfaction, happiness and loyalty.

This has shifted the higher education landscape significantly; everyone expects more than an education, they want an experience. This poses great opportunity to us all—educators, business partners and community members—to work together enabling a successful on-campus experience.

Operating a college campus is increasingly complicated and requires laser focus; focus that can only be achieved with partnership and exploring new ways to bring value to higher education. Sodexo is committed to furthering this important body of work as the sponsor of this Special Report: The Campus as City as we believe it is critical to listen, explore best-practices and share insights with the higher education community. Working together we can impact every step of the students' journey – from the choice of their university, to their arrival and assimilation on campus, and on to their departure into the professional world as responsible and successful citizens.

We hope you find the information in this report valuable and we look forward to collaborating in ways that will positively evolve the nature of higher education for generations to come.

Satya L. MENARD

Sodexo, world leader in Quality of Life Services, enhances the student experience on campus. By focusing on services that improve quality of life, we impact our partners' ability to attract, engage and retain students. From dining programs that meet the preferences and lifestyles of today's student to purpose-built environments designed to promote the mission of the institution, our commitment to improving quality of life spans the entire campus experience. Visit us at [www.us.sodexo.com](http://www.us.sodexo.com)



**SATYA MENARD**

**CEO Schools and Universities  
Worldwide**



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**Lawrence Biemiller**, a senior writer at *The Chronicle* who covers campus architecture and planning, among other topics, contributed to this report.

## INTRODUCTION



THOMAS KOJCSICH

A strong relationship over decades has paid off for both Virginia Commonwealth University and the city of Richmond.

**W**HEN TWO students ventured beyond their campus walls, went drinking, and offended — possibly assaulted — a tavern owner, townspeople rallied to his defense. Tensions were running high, and hundreds of students mobilized as well. It was Oxford, England, in 1355, and the St. Scholastica Day riot claimed more than 90 lives.

That may have been the bloodiest clash between town and gown, but it wasn't the first and certainly isn't the last. As colleges and universities have established their own enclaves, building up facilities and services, they don't always pay heed to their surrounding areas. At the time of the riot, townspeople begrudged





scholars' privileged status, and universities often meddled in local affairs, writes Alan B. Cobban in *English University Life in the Middle Ages*. "In the eyes of their citizens, it seemed that the towns of Oxford and Cambridge were being largely taken over by the universities in their midst," he says. "This created a framework of resentment."

But the two sides depended on each other. And they still do. Even as many campuses have become towns or cities unto themselves, they are also more often contiguous, physically and operationally, with the towns and cities beyond.

Today a college performs plenty of the functions of a local municipality: planning, housing, transportation, public safety, health care. Running institutions with growing profiles and footprints, presidents often act as mayors, working to manage multiple offices and contracts, to be good stewards, and to create and enact a vision for the future.

At the same time, campus walls are more porous. A college may be its own domain, but being part of a larger place increasingly means supporting it in numerous ways. The public now expects that. And a financially pressured or otherwise striving institution may need it. A commitment to collaboration can help attract students and employees, as well as earn goodwill and promote broader opportunity.

Today many colleges and their local communities are hotbeds of people, ideas, services, and industries — all more entwined than ever. There are whole metropolitan areas, like Boston and Philadelphia, where higher education is a major social, political, and economic driver. Fly across the Rust Belt and into the Midwest, and you'll see a landscape dotted with cities and towns that rely on the institutions within them: Rochester, N.Y.; Oberlin, Ohio; Madison, Wis.; Northfield, Minn. In Muncie, Ind., Ball State University is trying to fix the city's broken school system — and in the process, raise its own prospects.

Cities have also elevated colleges that capitalized on a fortunate location. American, George Washington, and Georgetown Universities have all expanded their facilities and impact as they've tied their curricula and identities to Washington's federal power structure. In Austin, Tex., San Francisco, and Seattle, higher-ed powerhouses have energized a self-sustaining culture of innovation that draws students from across the country to these entrepreneurial promised lands — and keeps graduates there.

The histories of American colleges and cities started separately and converged over time. In the early 1800s, church leaders and educators founded colleges in rural areas to isolate students, mainly

men from elite families, from the corrupting influences of the city, writes Steven J. Diner in *Universities and Their Cities: Urban Higher Education in America*. In the latter part of the 20th century, some small and medium-size college towns — Ann

**A college may be its own domain, but being part of a larger place increasingly means supporting it in numerous ways.**

Arbor, Mich.; Athens, Ga.; Chapel Hill, N.C.; Lawrence, Kan. — came to represent a kind of idyllic American life, or a countercultural refuge.

A wave of rural depopulation has hit tiny, remote colleges and towns the hardest. In some cases, neither college nor town could thrive. In Poultney, Vt., Green Mountain College recently announced its closure, and state officials sent in a “rapid-response force” to help residents come up with new ideas for economic activity, says Judy Leech, president of the local Chamber of Commerce. Could the campus become a business park, a trade school, a remote teaching facility for larger colleges, a prison, a psychiatric hospital? What could generate the same energy and demand as a college?



Meanwhile, Diner points out, many urban universities have built on the basis of a different mission: to educate the children of working-class and immigrant families. In the process, leaders of such institutions and their elite peers have often tried,

especially in recent decades, to harness their research and influence to lift up surrounding communities. The mission statements of three-quarters of urban universities now include commitments to public service, and nearly all of those institutions



CALEB KENNA

Robert W. Allen, president of Green Mountain College, announced that it would close in 2019, leaving its town of Poultney, Vt., to look for other options for economic activity.

have offices dedicated to community engagement, according to a recent study by the University of Virginia's Thriving Cities Lab.

The so-called eds-and-meds industries — education and health care — have been considered an engine of economic development. But colleges' capacity to help sustain their cities depends on their own continued growth.

Sometimes there's a powerful symbiosis. Virginia Commonwealth University and Richmond, Va., forged a strong relationship over the past 30 years that has been good for each of them. In the 1980s through the mid-1990s, Richmond had one of the highest murder rates in the nation, fueled by crack cocaine and the city's status as a pit stop in the drug trade along Interstate 95. At the time, VCU was still culturally and organizationally fractured since its formation, in 1968, from a state-of-ficiated shotgun marriage between a public medical school and a private professional school.

When Eugene P. Trani became president of the university, in 1990, he sought to raise its profile in partnership with the city. Under his leadership, VCU spent hundreds of millions of dollars to expand its Monroe Park campus — one of two — in a part of Richmond known as the Fan, because of the way it spreads out from the center of the city. The university's buildings for administration, classes, housing, food services, recreation, and the arts, among other functions, were designed to blend in with the area's urban fabric and historic architecture.

The president commissioned an economic-impact report to counter a notion among locals that the university was merely a burden. As chairman of the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce, he engaged local business leaders. He also created a

community advisory board to connect with neighborhoods and helped found CEOs for Cities, a national network that encourages innovation in city leadership and planning. Meanwhile, VCU's medical campus resisted financial incentives to move outside the city, where expansion would have been cheaper.

"Our mission has always been to the citizens of Richmond, to the people who live and work here," says Larry Little, vice president for support services and planning in the VCU Health System. "So we build up when we can't build out."

The relationship, over decades, has paid off for both sides. Richmond's renaissance and emerging status as a destination city, with a burgeoning

**The mission statements of three-quarters of urban universities now include commitments to public service, and nearly all of those institutions have offices dedicated to community engagement.**



foodie scene, hip bars, and offbeat retail shops, has no doubt helped the university increase its enrollment and its ranks of leading scholars. VCU has become a prominent state institution, with a number of highly ranked programs in the arts and sciences. In 2011, under President Michael Rao, the university made engagement with the city a factor in tenure and promotion. The Thriving Cities Lab has cited VCU as one of nine institutions in the country taking an innovative approach to town-gown relations.

But such transformations come with political risks and human costs. Drive down Broad Street, which runs along VCU's campus, and you'll see how local barbershops, salons, and retail stores serving a low- to middle-income population are slowly being replaced by trendy restaurants and boutique hotels. While some residents have lauded Richmond's development, others worry that it's pushing out poorer neighbors, artists, and "cultural outsiders," says the editor of a local queer publication. "Where will we live when the entire city has been gentrified?" An African-American activist is more pointed: "In Richmond, Va., gentrification is colonization."

This report examines the tensions and challenges of running a city within a city. A modern campus provides essential services, but it cannot operate in isolation, particularly with greater financial pressures bearing down on the college business model. A range of partnerships with private companies, local agencies, and community groups is vital to running a thriving 21st-century institution.

The first section explores how colleges can build capacity in crucial activities, coming up with better, more efficient ways to house, transport, and take care of their inhabitants. The second sec-

**A range of partnerships with private companies, local agencies, and community groups is vital to running a thriving 21st-century institution.**

tion examines what it means to be a responsible anchor institution and develop effective relationships with local-government, business, and civic leaders. The third section provides four close looks at bold bets and the major factors that drive large-scale projects.

With rising labor costs, falling public funding, suppressed tuition revenue, and greater competition for students, colleges can no longer afford to be the isolated, even locally antagonistic entities they might have been in the Middle Ages — and into the 20th century. Today successful institutions and their surrounding areas will have to grow together. Whether in small towns or in transforming cities, colleges have opportunities to stoke local economies, expand community resources, and prove their value to the public. At the same time, they can fortify themselves for the years ahead.

## SECTION 1

Arizona State University  
planned a dynamic  
downtown campus  
in collaboration  
with the city of Phoenix.



ARIZONA STATE U.



# Running a Modern Campus

**O**PERATING A college or university was never simple. But the modern campus has become a bustling little — or not so little — city, an entity that must coordinate a complex network of interconnected functions and services. Colleges have to house, feed, transport, engage, and protect their inhabitants, and increasingly support their neighbors, too.

Performing even the essential activities is getting more complicated. Transportation, for example, may now involve not just parking and shuttles, but new public transit lines, car and electric-scooter sharing, and electric-vehicle charging stations. In many facets of campus life, students have new expectations and needs, and colleges are competing for enrollment and striving to create an engaging environment to improve student success. Meanwhile, many institutions are under financial pressure to track their expenses and revenues and make sure they're spending money and energy wisely.

## TAKEAWAYS

Today a college must perform many of the functions of a city, like planning, transportation, and public safety.

Many types of partners can help tackle big projects, offering financial and other resources.

The development of housing, services, and amenities on and off campus is vital to attracting students.

Colleges are natural transit hubs and must manage both old and new modes of transportation.

Public-safety departments should work to maintain relationships with local residents and other law-enforcement agencies.

That can require campus leaders to rethink the way they've always done things. Old models may not hold up to new challenges. Some institutions are getting creative about where and how to, for example, expand facilities, offer amenities, or provide health care. Most of the time, they can't do it all themselves.

Colleges are increasingly turning to partners — private companies, community organizations, and local governments — for financial help and other resources. Such partnerships can supply investment capital, lend expertise, build the capacity to pull off a project, or just make things happen faster.

One way to follow this trend is to look at P3s, or public-private partnerships between institutions and companies, in which the latter may finance, build, and operate college “assets,” as industry insiders call revenue-generating facilities and services (See page 16). The value of P3 transactions tripled between 2011 and 2016, to more than \$3 billion, according to the consulting firm EY-Parthenon, and partnerships are projected to reach \$5 billion early in the next decade. More than eight in 10 senior administrators say the deals are increasing at their institutions, and common areas of interest are facilities, infrastructure, energy, parking, and housing, according to a survey in 2019 by *The Chronicle* and George Mason University.

Take expansion and development, some of the most economically important and politically contentious activities a college can pursue. Most educational institutions are not experienced real-estate developers, says Christopher B. Leinberger, a land-use strategist and chair of the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis at the George Washington University School of Business. To succeed, a college may need a range of partners. Even well-endowed institutions have entered into partnerships with private developers to pull off major projects, like the University of Pennsylvania's decades-long transformation of West Philadelphia.

P3s don't suit every need, and they can raise concerns — about control and mission, in particular. But they have emerged as a tool for colleges with strong balance sheets and healthy student demand to transfer some of the risk of construction timelines and costs to a private company. Partnerships are not just a way to put up a building, manage transportation, or run dining services. If well designed, they can strengthen a

college's own position and help it focus on core functions like teaching and research. Solid relationships with government, business, and civic groups, meanwhile can help raise an institution's local profile or elevate its reputation.

**Today, colleges have to be strategic planners and deft negotiators when seeking to expand, especially in areas with increased demand for real estate.**

This section examines several key functions — expansion and development of facilities, housing, transportation, public safety, and health care, as well as energy and food services — to highlight trends and innovations.

## **EXPANDING FOOTPRINTS**

For urban and some suburban colleges, expansion and development require planning ahead. But plans aren't always well laid. A typical pattern for decades was something like this: An institution, taking a hundred-year view of its growth, would acquire vacant or underused buildings or lots near the campus. Not knowing what to do with them in the near term, the institution would let them deteriorate further, often compounding problems in the community.

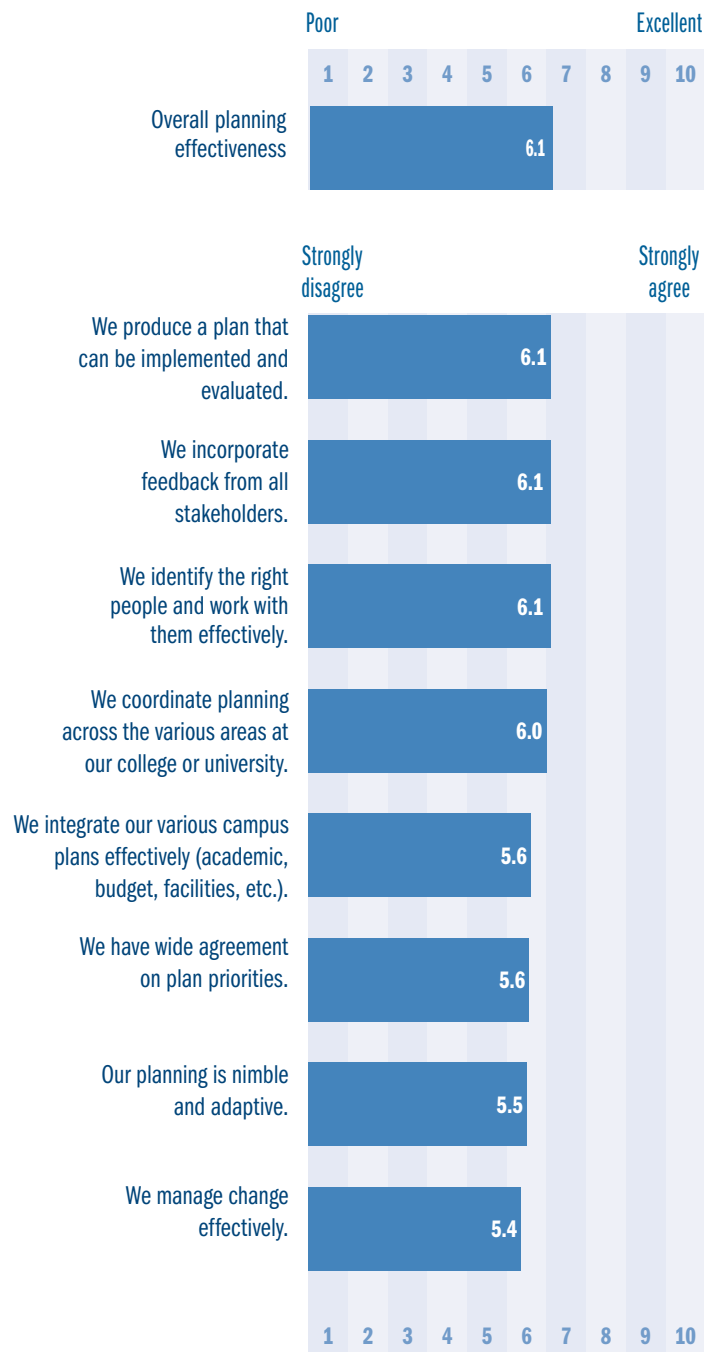
Today, colleges have to be strategic planners and deft negotiators when seeking to expand, especially in areas with increased demand for real estate. That means not acting richer and smarter than local officials or residents, says Leinberger. “It's a matter of listening to the neighbors and sitting down with them — not steamrolling them,” he says. “There are always design solutions.”

As Arizona State University's enrollment



## COLLEGES' SO-SO PLANNING

Campus officials give middling scores to their institutional-planning processes.



Source: "Succeeding at Planning: Results From the 2015 Survey of Higher Ed Leaders," Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) and Baker Strategy Group

was growing and the institution needed more space, it took an inclusive approach to planning a new campus in downtown Phoenix. The young, spread-out city was built in the era of the automobile. When Michael Crow became president of ASU, in 2002, he noticed a dead downtown, rife with blank surface parking lots and underutilized buildings. University administrators asked city officials what kind of metropolis Phoenix should become and how the institution could help realize that goal.

Arizona State proposed creating a campus that would draw people into the center of downtown and connect key sites like historic buildings, an arts district, and public-transit routes. The city responded by helping the university acquire 20 acres around the proposed location for a light-rail stop. In 2006, voters approved city bonds worth \$223 million for the project.

The university initially lodged students at a refurbished 1955 Ramada Inn and provided gym access through a YMCA that, in the past, had mainly served the homeless. Over several years, the new campus took shape. Programs with ties to the local community began moving to academic buildings tightly configured around amenities and planned open space: journalism, law, nursing, social work. The latter two now run a community-service clinic on the ground floor of a building called the Westward Ho, a historic hotel that had become low-income housing for the elderly. Other projects include transforming a historic post office into a student union that opens up onto a city park with public-art installations.

San Diego State University is similarly planning an expansion to bring new life to an underutilized part of its city — in this case, the old stadium for the San Diego Chargers, in Mission Valley. The university's

main campus had been running out of room, and as the football team mulled its future, administrators eyed the stadium site.

In 2017, when the Chargers announced that they were relocating to Los Angeles, the university made a push to acquire the land. An investment group known as SoccerCity had already generated support to transform the site into a soccer stadium, but San Diego State built a coalition of its own, including the mayor, key city council members, and the local Chamber of Commerce to back its proposed \$3-billion expansion. In 2018, 55 percent of voters endorsed it, while 30 percent supported SoccerCity.

Plans for the site, called SDSU Mission Valley, will begin with the construction of a hotel, conference center, and new stadium for the university's football team, which could also be used for other sporting events (including soccer) and concerts. The campus will offer more housing for graduate students and faculty members as well. "In a place like San Diego, where it's hard to find a place to live because of the high cost of living, attracting high-caliber faculty can often be a challenge," says Gina Jacobs, associate vice president for SDSU Mission Valley development.

Much of the development will be supported by public-private partnerships, she says. That way the university can expand without relying on revenue from tuition and fees, and some commercial portions of the new campus will get on the tax rolls. "One of the goals in this plan is to make it a regional asset," Jacobs says, "not just benefit the university, but also benefit the greater San Diego region."

## LIVELY PLACES TO LIVE

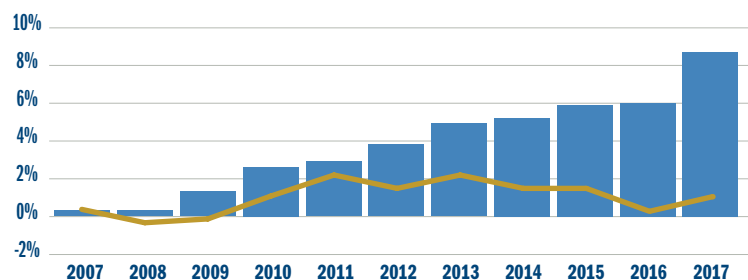
Housing has been a standard activity in higher education for

## MORE NEW SPACE THAN STUDENTS

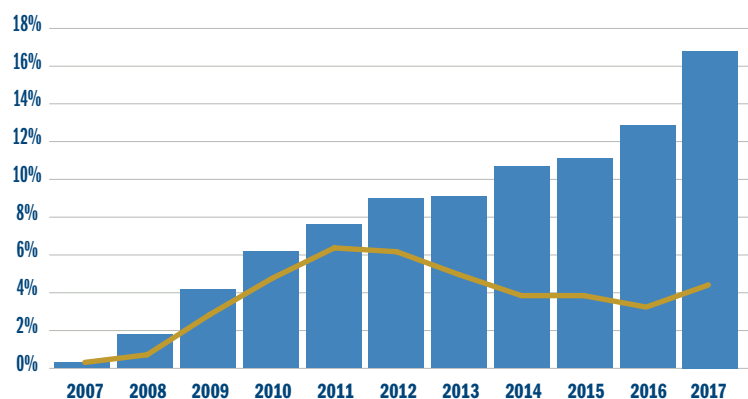
Many institutions may be building more facilities than they can fill.

■ Cumulative growth in constructed space ■ Cumulative growth in enrollment

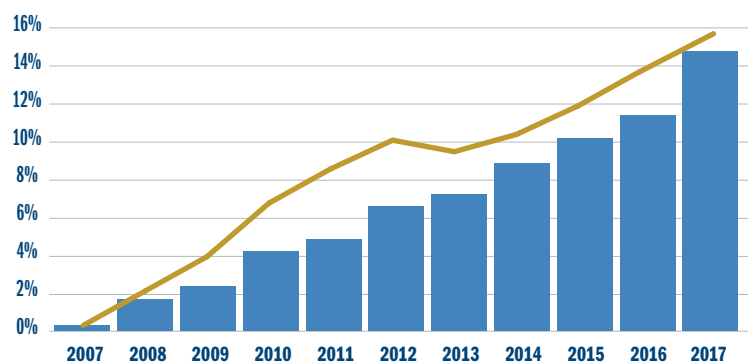
### Baccalaureate colleges



### Master's institutions



### Research universities



Note: Cumulative growth values are indexed to the 2007 fiscal year and represent averages of 360 U.S. and Canadian campuses in the Sightlines database.

Source: "2018 State of Facilities in Higher Education," Sightlines

centuries: often cinder-block dormitories for students, two or three to a room, to study and sleep. But in recent years, institutions have focused on residence halls as tools for recruitment and retention. Now many offer luxury accommodations with access to gyms, other recreational space, and a range of dining options. Colleges have found that residence life and related programming can engage students

and help them build a social network of peers and professors to counter feelings of isolation that might lead them to drop out.

The approaches to building residence halls have also changed in the last few decades. Colleges once raised the revenue for new construction or renovation on their own, often issuing bonds and using room and board fees as auxiliary income. Now institutions increasingly rely on third-party developers to design, build, and manage student housing, with the developers drawing a portion of the revenue from room and board to pay off the project and turn a profit. Some campus officials considering such deals worry about a fair distribution of risks and revenue, or the focus shifting from students to the bottom line, while others feel confident that they can achieve a shared understanding with the right partner.

Another recent consideration for housing is using it to integrate the campus and the surrounding city or town. College leaders should look for opportunities to leverage new projects to benefit students and local residents, and perhaps reinvigorate a neighborhood.

Towson University, another growing institution, has seen its enrollment jump to 23,000 students, from 16,000 in the year 2000. The public university north of Baltimore will enroll its largest freshman class to date in the fall of 2019. That growth has contributed to about \$1 billion in private development in anemic downtown Towson. Towson Row, a \$350-million project, will feature student housing along with luxury apartments, office space, a hotel, restaurants, and a Whole Foods.

The university also acquired an old Marriott across the street from the campus. A \$2-million renovation in 2018 —



GETTY IMAGES

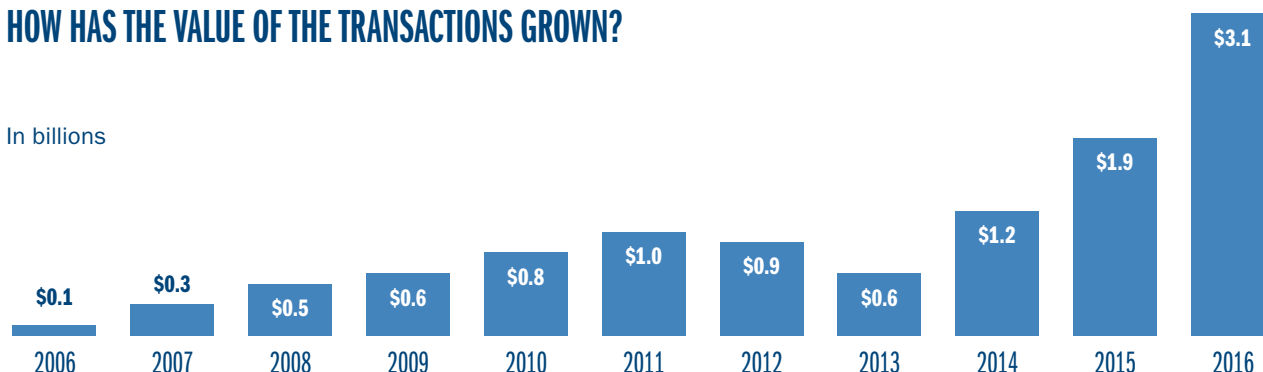
**To live in Colby College's new residence hall in downtown Waterville, Me., students have to participate in service-learning projects for two hours a week.**



# Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) on the Rise

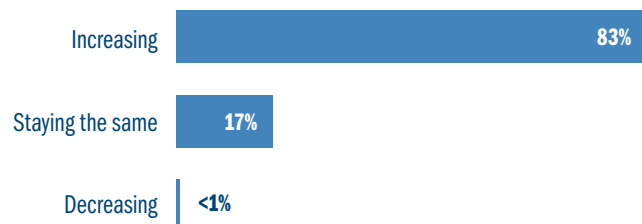
## HOW HAS THE VALUE OF THE TRANSACTIONS GROWN?

In billions

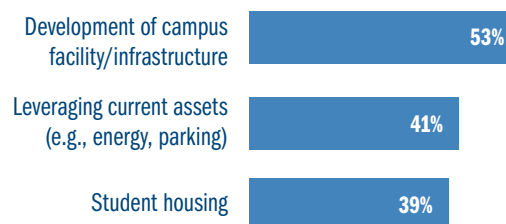


Source: "Public-Private Partnerships in Higher Education," EY and Parthenon

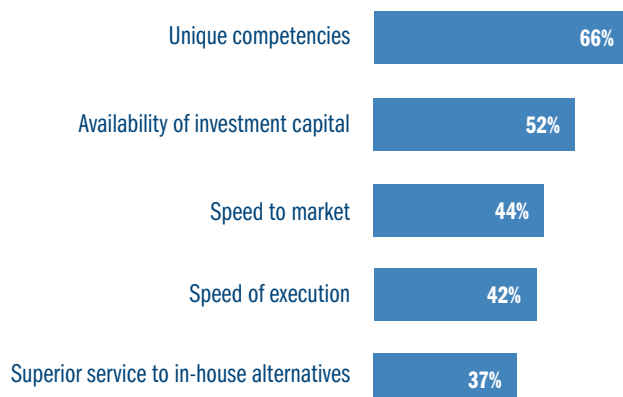
## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE DEALS ON YOUR CAMPUS?



## WHERE DOES YOUR INSTITUTION WANT A PARTNER?



## WHY DOES YOUR INSTITUTION WANT A PARTNER?



## WHAT RESERVATIONS DO YOU HAVE?

- Loss of control
- Different mission, culture, or values
- Cost

Note: This list reflects the most common responses to an open-ended question.

Note: Multiple responses to the second and third questions were accepted.

Source: Survey of 249 presidents, provosts, and chief financial officers conducted in 2019 by The Chronicle and George Mason University

about a tenth of the cost of new construction — converted the hotel into dedicated housing for transfer students. The hope is to give them an opportunity to live on campus and build community.

In small, remote college towns, capital investments can start to turn around years of neglect. In Waterville, Me., where the decline of mills and manufacturing has left scores of abandoned buildings downtown, Colby College has put student housing at the center of an ambitious project to revive the city.

When David A. Greene became president of Colby in 2014, coming from a job as executive vice president at the University of Chicago, he could see that Waterville needed help, and he believed a partnership with the city could help the college, too. Colby also owed the city a tremendous debt: A hundred years ago, when the college was poor and running out of room, the townspeople raised more than \$100,000 to support its move to its current location, where it could expand. In the decades since, Colby has become a highly selective, well-endowed liberal-arts college.

“Maybe this was the moment,” Greene says, “when Colby needed to do something that was dramatic, important, and lasting for the city in the way that the city had done for Colby.”

Administrators went to a local foundation and got a grant to work with the city to hire urban planners and other experts who pointed to the need for strong economic drivers in the downtown core. Colby purchased eight properties for about \$2 million, planning to open a tech center, hotel, and arts center — and to move students and faculty members in.

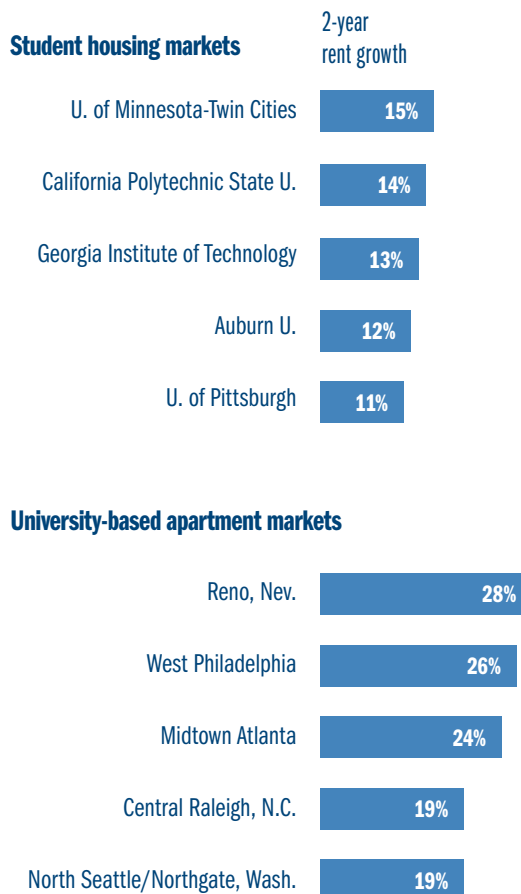
A new residence hall for 200 students, as well as faculty and staff members, includes fitness and wellness centers, lounges, and a reading room, plus retail space on the ground floor. Shops and restaurants have yet to fill the space, but the Waterville City Council meets in a community room there. To live in the building, students agree to participate in service-learning projects — two hours a week — with social-service agencies, schools, the local fire department, and a homeless shelter, among other partners.

Initial skepticism that students would want to relocate to moribund Waterville proved unfounded: 400 applied to live in the new residence hall in the fall of 2019. Some locals have raised concerns about competition for parking downtown, but fears that the urban outpost would become a party problem haven’t materialized.

Students’ behavior seems to change when they live downtown, Greene says. He often hears of students and faculty members getting together for a glass of wine or dinner. Students told one professor that they weren’t interest-

## HOUSING THAT COULD PAY OFF

Investors are eyeing the following top-ranked institutions and regions.



Source: “The Real Estate of College Towns,” Real Estate Solutions by Moody’s Analytics (REIS), 2018



ed in having a party. “We want to have people over,” they said.

#### **GOOD OPTIONS FOR GETTING AROUND**

People need to get to, from, and across campuses, and discussions about how to facilitate

that can get heated. Mere questions about parking lots and permit fees have ignited endless feuds. Now fleets of dockless scooters may appear overnight as part of a 150-campus pop-up tour, while local officials are debating extensions of public transit.

# The Future of Energy Efficiency

**T**oday’s college campuses are test beds for energy-efficiency ideas that will help sustain the cities of the future, says Don Guckert, associate vice president and director of facilities management at the University of Iowa. “The diversity that we have on our campuses — parking systems, space utilization, pedestrian movement, and energy and building maintenance — emulates what happens in the city,” he says. The smart systems that will eventually run cities are already being deployed at institutions like Iowa. Among them:

**Improved sensor capabilities, increasingly interconnected mechanical systems, and artificial and augmented intelligence are helping universities operate buildings more efficiently.** Lights in unoccupied rooms shut themselves off, heating and cooling systems respond to real-time conditions in individual spaces, and the high-powered fans that move air in laboratory fume hoods spin down when doors on the hoods are closed. “The most recent biomedical-research building we put in place has 23,000 points of data collection,” Guckert says. “The challenge is what data we should worry about.”

**The same systems can also help keep machinery operating at peak efficiency.** Until recently, a university could fine-tune an older building’s heating, air-conditioning, and ventilation equipment (the process is called recommissioning), but after a few years the energy savings would diminish. “The equipment starts aging, filters get clogged, our maintenance staff starts fussing with dampers, that sort of thing,” Guckert says. “The technology that’s now being put into place will hold all that equipment at an optimized level. When energy performance starts to degrade, we know it almost immediately.” That kind of optimization is crucial to energy savings.

**Advances in materials science will bring more improvements in the next decade.** “We’re starting to build intelligence into our building products,” says Guckert. “In the future, solar panels will look like windows, and the heat that our buildings’ shells absorb will be converted to energy.” Materials science, nanotechnology, the internet of things, and sensor capabilities are converging for a “dramatically different” future, he says. “We’re excited about where technology is taking us.”



Smart systems are helping the University of Iowa conserve energy, says Don Guckert, associate vice president and director of facilities management.

U. OF IOWA



CAMPUSPARC

An upfront payment of \$483 million to Ohio State University drew attention to its 50-year deal to outsource parking to a private company.

Ohio State University has thought broadly about transportation, conceiving of new ways to manage its assets, like garages, and other mobility options. In 2012, the university outsourced all of its parking to a private company in a 50-year lease. The deal included an upfront payment of \$483 million, which boosted Ohio State's endowment by 20 percent, supporting scholarships, new faculty positions, and infrastructure projects. While that figure captured the attention of institutions across the country, the contract also came with some restrictions. For example, the university can't take steps to significantly reduce the number of drivers coming to campus, which may conflict with sustainability goals.

At the same time, Ohio State is negotiating with scooter-rental companies, with plans to award a contract in 2019. The university is asking applicants to collect data for its researchers on the scooters' location and use, set up geofencing to reward riders who park in designated spots, and throttle the speed in pedestrian areas. The campus is also opening a bike hub where students can buy bicycles and learn to repair them. "We feel that if students have easy access to bike repair and bike education, not only will they ride smarter, but we will have fewer bikes abandoned on campus," says Beth Snoke, Ohio State's director of transportation and traffic management.

The university's focus on transportation extends to its surrounding city. In partnership

## TOP PERFORMERS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Here are the institutions in North America that scored highest in different areas on the Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System.

### Buildings

1. U. of California at Irvine
2. Nova Scotia Community College
3. U. of California at Santa Barbara
4. Appalachian State U.
4. California State U. at Sacramento

### Energy

1. American U.
2. U. of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
3. U. of Tennessee at Knoxville
4. Green Mountain College
5. U. of New Hampshire
5. U. of South Florida

### Food and dining

1. Sterling College
2. U. of Connecticut
3. U. of Washington-Seattle
4. U. of Winnipeg
5. Denison University

Source: "2018 Sustainable Campus Index," Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education



## CLIMATE ACTION, BY THE NUMBERS



Source: Second Nature

with Columbus, Ohio State won a \$50-million grant to study and improve transportation in the region.

Many campuses are natural transit hubs. “There has long been a positive university-transit relationship in both directions,” says Christof Spieler, an urban planner and transit expert who is a lecturer at Rice University. Transit lines can connect campuses to local amenities, and students can be ideal riders, often living in densely populated areas, not owning cars, and moving around throughout the day and into the night.

The college towns of Eugene, Ore., and Fort Collins, Colo., both support extensive transit systems despite being small cities, says Spieler. Light rail runs through the center of Portland State University, San Diego State University, and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

**Duke University blocked light-rail construction in Durham, N.C., out of concern that trains’ vibrations would affect sensitive scientific equipment.**

Arizona State planned for a light-rail stop on its downtown campus, seeing it as key to the success of the development.

But negotiations to ease access aren’t always smooth. “Most universities are downright obsessed with physical control of their campus,” says Spieler. Some try to push transit to the edge of the campus, or kill it altogether. Duke University, for example, blocked light-rail construction in Durham, N.C., out of concern that trains’ vibrations would affect sensitive scientific equipment.

One way colleges retain control is by operating buses. But that might not be the most efficient model — or support a healthy municipal transit system. A partnership with a local transit authority could offer reduced fares for students and faculty members and perhaps set up more frequent or later service to campus or city hotspots.

“But there is the question of who is allowed to ride,” Spieler says. A university can limit ridership on its own buses, whereas everyone can ride a public bus or train. “Universities perceive that as a safety concern,” he says.

### SECURITY ON AND OFF CAMPUS

Public safety is often top of mind for students and parents, and campuses approach it differently. Most four-year public colleges employ sworn, armed police officers, according to federal data, while more than half of private colleges have unsworn, unarmed security officers. Proposals to arm officers, sometimes spurred by campus shootings, have been contentious at some institutions.

But today’s campus law-enforcement officers have shed their old reputation of being little more than night watchmen. Many agencies expanded during the enrollment increases of the late 20th century, advancing community-police-





JOHN MINCHILLO, AP IMAGES

A white University of Cincinnati police officer shot and killed an unarmed black man in 2015, inflaming racial tensions in the city.

ing strategies like foot patrols and ride-along programs. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, followed by the shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007 set off a new wave of emergency preparedness and professionalization.

Towson is one institution where the force is large and well funded. Forty officers operate out of a state-of-the-art, \$8-million public-safety building that can act as a nerve center during an emergency. One room in the building, filled with screens, displays images from cameras pointed at nearly every public space on campus.

Still, institutions need additional support. Nearly nine in 10 public colleges and more than six in 10 private colleges have at least one memorandum of understanding or mutual-aid agreement with another agency, such as a local police department or sheriff's office, federal data show. Miami University, in Ohio, posts a dozen agreements online that coordinate SWAT teams, medical services, and counseling

in case of emergencies.

Sometimes a proposal to establish a police force sparks outcry. At Johns Hopkins University, students chained themselves to a building to protest the formation of an agency of 100 armed officers there. Protesters said the force would endanger marginalized people on campus, including non-white and queer students.

A presence in the local community can present more challenges. Campus police, marked by their uniforms, badges, and cars, may patrol surrounding neighborhoods. The University of Cincinnati's push into nearby Clifton Heights was about protecting students and employees after several reports of muggings and assaults.

In 2015, that plan blew up, when a white campus officer shot and killed an unarmed black man during a traffic stop. The incident inflamed racial tensions in the city and challenged the status of the university police. The institution began a major overhaul, led by Robin S. Engel,



# Making Food Social and Local

**M**iddlebury College's three dining halls are unusually important campus social hubs, in part because the student center isn't a great see-and-be-seen space, and in part because every student is on an unlimited meal plan. "Some students stay in the dining hall six hours a day studying — they just never leave," says Dan Detora, executive director of food-service operations.

Middlebury is also unusual in a way that's more forward-looking: It spends about a quarter of its food budget — or more than \$1 million last academic year — on purchases from local sources, says Detora. Milk, yogurt, and cheese come from Monument Farms Dairy, just three miles away. Eggs come from Maple Meadow Farms, seven miles in the other direction. The college buys beef locally and has it slaughtered and butchered in-state. Chicken,

maple syrup, apples — all local. Coffee isn't grown in Vermont, "but it's roasted right up the road at Vermont Coffee," Detora says. The college is now considering buying pork from another nearby farm.

Locally sourced food is a highly visible part of Middlebury's commitment to sustainability, but it's not an easy achievement. Location is important — not every institution has a dairy farm three miles away — as is ample refrigerator and freezer space. The administration's support for local food is also critical, Detora says. "Some of the stuff is fairly expensive."

That kind of commitment is a boon to a farming community, where even a fairly small college has enough buying power to make a big difference. And increasingly, says Detora, local foods are easier to find and acquire. Still, in Vermont, produce remains a problem. "We do

stock up on root vegetables in the fall, but winter produce is probably the biggest challenge that we face."

The college has considered buying a container farm to grow food hydroponically entirely within a shipping container, LED lights and all. Detora recently visited one that produces about 700 heads of lettuce a week, year-round. That's enough for one or two of the three dining halls. "It's a really cool concept," he says. "It's fairly expensive now, but I can see the cost going down a little bit and that being something for the future."

Detora is looking for other ways to make the dining halls more sustainable, such as serving beef tongue, heart, or tripe. "If we're going to be truly sustainable, we should be using the whole animal. There are certainly students I've talked to who would be willing to try. If you've ever tried heart, it's delicious."



Middlebury College students, on unlimited meal plans with locally sourced food, are known to "stay in the dining hall six hours a day," says Dan Detora, executive director of food-service operations.

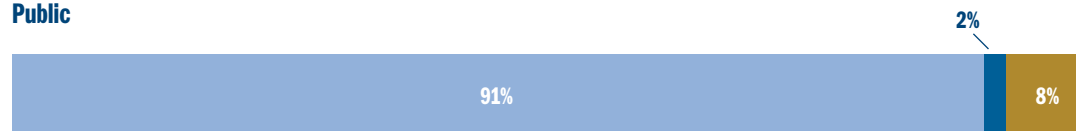
BRIDGET BESAW

## WHO'S PROTECTING THE CAMPUS

Law-enforcement officers at public colleges are much more likely to be armed and sworn by a state or local authority.

■ Sworn, armed officers ■ Sworn, unarmed officers ■ Unsworn, armed officers ■ Unsworn, unarmed officers

### Public



### Private



Note: The figures, the most recent available, represent four-year institutions with at least 2,500 students and may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
Source: "Campus Law Enforcement, 2011-12," U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics

a professor of criminal justice and a national expert on police reform, who became vice president for safety and reform. Many of the University of Cincinnati's efforts, based on building partnerships, could be adapted to any campus.

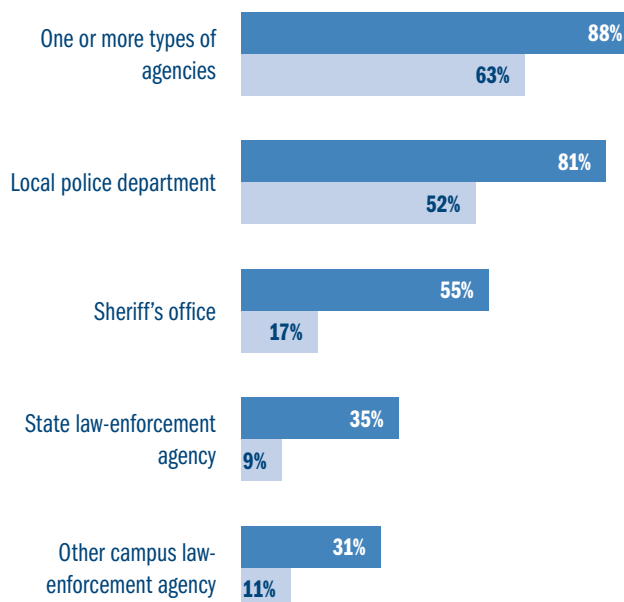
In key moves, the university hired two assistant chiefs from the city police force, one known for her ties to the community, and promoted some officers from within to recognize good work and to signal opportunities for advancement there. It invited members of the community, including critics, to sit on an advisory council. And the public-safety department made attempts to mend neglected relationships with local community organizations and businesses, Engel says.

Campus officers now attend all meetings of the surrounding community associations, even sitting through discussions that don't involve university business. "Have the relationship before you really need it," says James Whalen, the university's director of public safety, who was one of the hires from the city force. "Don't wait till something goes wrong to go introduce

## MUTUAL AID FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

What share of colleges' public-safety departments have memorandums of understanding or mutual-aid agreements with other units?

■ Public ■ Private



Note: The figures, the most recent available, represent four-year institutions with at least 2,500 students.  
Source: "Campus Law Enforcement, 2011-12," U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics



yourself to your neighbors.” The community meetings have yielded unexpected progress on problems like how to route traffic during university sporting events without undercutting local businesses.

One way the university has tried to repair a strained relationship with the city police department is by finding new ways to jointly handle off-campus incidents involving students, like parties and other disturbances. Before the reforms, community members said, campus officers had neglected to monitor the 12,000 students living in the neighborhoods surrounding the campus. The university also responded by tightening nuisance rules to put pressure on both students and landlords.

Achievements in public safety don’t necessarily involve an officer walking the beat or riding a squad car. For instance, the university and the city worked together to get a lighted crosswalk in the middle of a block where students tended to cross and some had been struck.

“A lot of police agencies think that they can only fix problems with police resources,” says Engel. “If you see a problem with pedestrian

safety, your response is to issue tickets to motorists to slow down traffic,” she says. “But there are better ways to solve that problem, and

**Even large academic medical centers have had to go through similar consolidations to the rest of the health-care industry.**

you can't do it without the partnerships that we have with the city.”

#### **HEALTH CARE FOR STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS**

Health care and higher education have faced similar pressures on cost, access, and account-



STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON HOSPITAL

Stony Brook University was a lifeline for the former Southampton Hospital, which, in turn, became another asset to anchor the university’s position in the community.

ability. And many institutions that integrate both have had to take new approaches.

Small community hospitals, like many small colleges, have neither the economies of scale nor the broad expertise of larger institutions, which can lead them to struggle. University hospitals have long generated modest revenue but have come under greater financial strain for a variety of reasons, including federal funding cuts and policy reforms, as well as serving more low-income and uninsured patients.

Medium-size academic medical centers in particular have suffered. And even large academic medical centers — the Medical University of South Carolina, for example, and the University of Maryland Medical Center — have had to go through similar consolidations to the rest of the health-care industry. They have often merged, acquired, or partnered with community hospitals and small clinics to expand their patient base and reduce administrative costs.

For some universities, acquisitions and partnerships can be not only financially advantageous, but also useful to their missions and local reputations. In 2017, at the urging of the New York state government, Stony Brook University — which already ran two hospitals and more than 90 community-based health-care settings throughout the county, as well as six professional schools in the health sciences — acquired the struggling Southampton Hospital, which had to rely on fund raising to stay in the black.

Although it's located in the Hamptons, known as a wealthy summer destination, the hospital tends to serve the area's permanent residents, many of whom work in groundskeeping, maintenance, fishing, hospitality, and other blue-collar jobs that support the tourism industry. The hospital is also the largest employer on Long Island's South Fork. "We're one of the few employers offering year-round, steady employment with decent benefits," says Robert S. Chaloner, the president and CEO of the new Stony Brook Southampton Hospital. Employees there feel a direct connection to the well-being of the community, financially and otherwise.

The university, through its sheer size, was a lifeline for the hospital. Stony Brook Medicine provided the equipment and expertise to open

a trauma center with emergency surgeons. It brought programs in osteopathic surgery, vascular medicine, cardiology, and other specialties, along with more negotiating power in dealing with insurers. The hospital now saves more than \$1 million just by buying in bulk through the university.

Stony Brook, in turn, has yet another asset to anchor its local position. The hospital will provide medical students with an opportunity to practice in a community setting and maybe more incentive to put down roots.

Halfway across the country, in Albion, Mich., it was a college that asked for help from a health-care provider to serve students and local residents.

**"We're one of the few employers offering year-round, steady employment with decent benefits."**

"Our hospital left 30 years ago," says Mauri Ditzler, president of Albion College. One of his goals after assuming that post, in 2014, was "to open an extended-care clinic in town, to make this a more desirable place for faculty and staff to live."

The college attracted a local nonprofit hospital with an offer of free space in a residence hall and, through a state grant, assistance with renovations and equipment. Oaklawn Express Care-Albion, operated by Oaklawn Hospital, opened as a family-practice and express-care clinic in 2019. It offers walk-in appointments to students and local residents alike.

Across several key functions, the modern campus must re-evaluate its options to meet students' needs and public expectations while containing costs. To operate responsibly and efficiently these days often means forging mutually beneficial partnerships with outside entities. The next section will explore colleges' relationships in the local community.



## SECTION 2

Johns Hopkins University won a contentious battle to redevelop Middle East, a neighborhood of Baltimore now known as Eager Park.



JOSEPH GIORDANO



# The Role of an Anchor Institution

**T**O ITS neighbors, a college may be an anchor, a tyrant, a savior, a villain. Many institutions strive to be local economic engines, and their impact can be immense and vital. Still, community activists might argue over how inclusive growth is.

Redevelopment is controversial almost anywhere, but a college in the mix brings with it all of the baggage of its history and position. Residents often harbor deep resentments about rowdy students, an institution's wealth and exclusivity, or its dominance of the local economy. Race and class are compounding factors. Students joined Harlem residents to protest Columbia University's construction of a gymnasium in 1968 with shouts of "Gym Crow!" Maybe today an urban institution is celebrating a new boutique hotel or angling to replace a local grocer with a Trader Joe's.

## TAKEAWAYS

Public-funding cuts, neighborhood crises, and a sense of responsibility have all pushed colleges to take a more active role in their communities.

Colleges are major players in their local economies — and should demonstrate that impact and the long-term investment that made it possible.

Redevelopment anywhere is a fraught process, but being inclusive and communicative can help ease tensions.

Effective partnerships for economic development reflect the interests of both colleges and local groups.

Despite tensions, there are many opportunities for positive collaboration in cities and small towns. Whether through thoughtful redevelopment or other projects, partnerships between colleges and local entities can benefit students, employees, and residents. Good relationships are founded on committed leadership, goals that align with both institutional missions and community objectives, and clear channels of communication.

Before the 1990s, colleges operated mostly independently of their surrounding areas, says Wim Wiewel, president of Lewis & Clark College and a former president of Portland State University, who has studied the role of urban institutions. But external and internal forces changed that: With state-funding cuts in the '80s and '90s, it became politically important for public universities in particular to show that they mattered to their cities and states, especially as manufacturing and other industries

waned. And faculty members and students were growing more interested in engaging with urban environments.

On his first day as president of Portland State, in 2008, Wiewel rode his bicycle to campus alongside Portland's mayor, Sam Adams. It was a symbolic gesture to highlight collaboration between the university and the city. Over nine years, Wiewel's projects included a partnership with Portland General Electric to support research on electric cars, renewable energy, and smart-grid technology.

But a friendly bike ride is not the norm. "The motivation for universities to more proactively and intentionally think about their relationship with cities was driven by crises," says Wiewel. The University of Pennsylvania's drive to transform the neighborhoods around the west side of its campus, for example, came after a series of muggings and assaults, in which one graduate student and one researcher were killed.



PORTLAND GENERAL ELECTRIC

Electric-vehicle charging stations at Portland State University, in Oregon, are one of several joint projects with the city's public utility.

Institutions have realized they can't wall themselves off from their cities, not anymore. But what is their role? What are the routes to being a responsible anchor institution, and what are the minefields along the way?

"Blight" is a loaded term, and an institution's use of it may raise questions about whom a particular project is for. "Higher education is a key growth machine in today's cities because it has been given the keys to drive the urban economy forward by reorganizing urban space to serve its institutional desires as much as or more than its educational interests," Davarian L. Baldwin, a professor of American studies at Trinity College in Connecticut, wrote in *The Chronicle* in 2017. He is studying the rise of what he calls "UniverCities" and how higher education became "the friendly face of urban-renewal projects across the country."

At their worst, colleges have a long history of "strip-mining their communities" through teaching and research, Joshua J. Yates, research director of the University of Virginia's Thriving Cities Lab, told *The Chronicle* in 2019. Residents in nearby low-income neighborhoods may tire of seeing armies of researchers with clipboards, measuring problems with little apparent change. With any partnership, he said, "the real question is, is it reciprocal?"

But at its best, any institution can be a crucial problem solver and the foundation of the local economy, says Christopher B. Leinberger, a land-use strategist and chair of the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis at the George Washington University School of Business. In cities, universities tend to control some of the most active, dense, and walkable urban space. The nation's environmental and economic future depends on more of that.

Research parks and innovation districts can be relatively successful forms of community engagement, Leinberger says. And institutions with medical centers may see benefits from their greater involvement. Higher education may have the best chance next to the military at reaching and serving a broad cross-section of society, he says. "Don't bemoan it. Just have active programs that are inclusive."

This section lays out three categories — economic impact, partnerships for local development, and community relations — to examine key principles and promising models.

## TOP 5 CONCERNS FOR TOWN-GOWN RELATIONS

What are campus and local officials worried about?

- Noise and parties
- Alcohol and drugs
- Housing
- Parking and traffic
- Relationship between students and permanent residents


Source: "International Town-Gown Association 2018 Data Digest"

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

Colleges add value to their local communities and regions, and campus officials often want or need to demonstrate that. Public funding and esteem have both fallen: For the first time in many years — maybe ever — a significant minority of Americans (and a majority of Republicans) think colleges and universities have a negative effect on the nation. Institutions are increasingly measuring their activities and contributions and trying to tell a compelling story.

In the last 10 to 15 years, more colleges have prepared economic-impact studies or commissioned independent analyses. They often result in catchy infographics, reports featuring community-service photos, and even videos, one with a dollar value steadily ticking up across the bottom of the screen. "Morgan is a major economic engine for the city and state, annually producing \$1 billion in statewide economic impact," says Morgan State University, in Baltimore. The University of Miami "directly employs more than 13,000 people," it says, "and is responsible for the existence of more than



A photograph showing three people—two men and one woman—crouched on a white plastic container, examining a large, dark, mesh-covered object (likely a sea grass or shellfish cultivation bag) in a body of water. The man on the left is wearing a light blue shirt and jeans, the woman in the middle is wearing a dark blue sweatshirt and glasses, and the man on the right is wearing a red hoodie. In the background, there is a modern white building with large windows and a balcony, and some tall grasses. The sky is blue with some clouds.

**Stony Brook University, on Long Island, has engaged local partners to mitigate water pollution and restore sea grass and shellfish populations.**



43,000 jobs in South Florida.”

New groups or partnerships help colleges make their case. The Institute for Research on Innovation and Science formed in 2015 to “improve our ability to understand, explain, and improve the public value of research.” The Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities integrated two bodies in 2018 to create the Commission on Economic and Community Engagement. The Association of Community College Trustees and Emsi, an economic-modeling company, created a model that has generated more than 1,700 economic-impact studies, for over half of community colleges in the country.

Regional public universities and urban institutions are two types that pay particular attention to measuring and sharing their value. And local partnerships can help amplify their impact.

Stony Brook University, founded in 1957 as a teachers’ college, has harnessed partnerships to elevate its position to one of the top research institutions in the country. But Stony Brook, part of the State University of New York system, is very much of its place, tackling issues that support local industries and interests on Long Island. As something of an upstart, the university has been gritty and open to opportunities, says Judith B. Greiman, senior vice president for government and community relations.

Along with the Battelle Memorial Institute, a nonprofit science-and-technology development company, Stony Brook runs Brookhaven National Laboratory, one of the top energy-research facilities in the country. And the university also collaborates with Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, a top research facility in medicine and biology. Those partnerships fuel Stony Brook’s activity on climate prediction, offshore wind energy, and renewable-energy storage.

The university’s School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, in particular, has engaged the local government, industries, and communities to mitigate water pollution and its adverse impact on fish and shellfish populations, as well as coastal storm surges. The school has developed a biofilter that captures much of the nitrogen leached from septic systems — and offered that technology to the private sector for free, trying to seed a local industry. The school is also working on the Shinnecock Bay Restoration Program to revive sea grasses,

which oxygenate water, and shellfish like clams, which filter the water. Since 2012, the program has planted more than three-million clams in “spawner sanctuaries.”

Stony Brook commissioned a study in 2018

**Economic-impact studies can clearly lay out how deeply an institution supports a local community. But policy makers might take for granted the long-term public investment that made an institution a powerhouse.**

to measure the university’s economic impact, calculating the direct and indirect effects of operations and research, as well as graduates’ earnings, families’ spending, and other activities. The study found that the university contributed \$7.2 billion to the local economy, supporting \$2.4 billion in earnings and more than 50,000 jobs. Two lessons from that process for other colleges are:

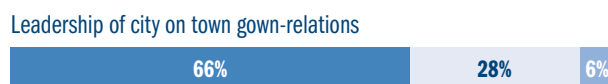
**Highlight the investment in the institution.** Economic-impact studies are tricky. On one hand, they can clearly lay out how deeply an institution supports a local community. On the other, policy makers might take for granted the long-term public investment that made an institution a powerhouse. State officials may note many accomplishments despite stagnant funding, says Greiman. “Be careful of your success if you’re scrappy,” she says. Lawmakers might ask you to get scrappier. The university noted that its \$7.2-billion impact represented a 1,500-percent return on the state’s \$470-million investment. Campus leaders should stress that effective investments are long term and cumulative.

## CAMPUS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS WORKING TOGETHER

The two sides generally see improved collaboration and feel good about their efforts.

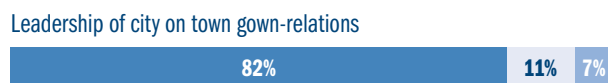
### How is the following compared with five years ago?

■ Better ■ Same ■ Worse



### How is it now?

■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative



Source: "International Town-Gown Association 2018 Data Digest"

**Emphasize social mobility.** Stony Brook ranks highly among its peers for enrolling and graduating first-generation and under-represented-minority students. Half of Stony Brook students in the bottom income quintile reach the top quintile after graduation, according to a study by Stanford University's Institute for Economic Policy Research. And Stony Brook's proportion of students from the lowest bracket is four times that of some institutions in the Ivy League. The regional public university has trumpeted those findings. And Greiman has found lawmakers to be receptive. "They all know people who went here and got out, graduated in four years, have changed their lives, and are working in local companies," she says.

## PARTNERSHIPS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

A college and its local community can strengthen each other in a positive feedback loop. Many campus leaders feel a sense of responsibility to make their institutions economic engines and forces for good. There's also a recognition that the fates of a college and its city or town are tied together. In other words, support can pay off.

Take Albion, Mich., an old manufacturing town with a dwindling population and many vacant storefronts. The small city is also home to Albion College, which had struggled with enrollment declines and budget deficits. Now the college is trying to make itself more attractive to prospective students by helping to drive local redevelopment through investment and other support. In the midst of its so-called big plan, the city has loft-style apartment housing, a new Courtyard by Marriott hotel, a co-working space, and a renovated theater. Another project combined five storefronts into a college-community space.

"The future of colleges like Albion is inextricably linked to the quality of life in their host communities," Mauri Ditzler, the institution's president, told the local *Battle Creek Enquirer*. "I've always felt that, if you want to improve the quality of the college, you have to think about the quality of its town."

Sometimes local officials turn to colleges for help. In many cities, that help is quantified as payments in lieu of taxes, or Pilot: voluntary contributions that represent a fraction of a nonprofit institution's estimated property taxes. But payments often lag relative to requests, which can create tensions as cities face budget shortfalls while watching the endowments and footprints of tax-exempt colleges grow. The in-



stitutions, for their part, may point to community benefits like service programs and other resources.

In the last several years, Providence, R.I., has been trying to figure out how to tap into its higher-education institutions to revitalize neighborhoods and cover a \$1.3-billion unfunded-pension liability that threatens to bankrupt the city. Officials considered raising their Pilot requests — current payments are about \$6 million — but concluded that even double that would do little to help.

“We realized that if our relationship with the colleges is transactional, simply based on increasing Pilot payments, we would be missing an opportunity to make our relationships much more transformational,” says Jorge O. Elorza, Providence’s mayor. He visited Pittsburgh and St. Louis, two other post-industrial towns that relied on “eds and meds” — the higher-education and health-care industries — and pondered how to expand partnerships at home. The city’s artsy, entrepreneurial vibe, he

points out, already comes from institutions like Brown University, the Rhode Island School of Design, and Johnson & Wales University, a leading culinary school.

In 2018, the city, eight colleges, and two health-care companies formed the Urban Innovation Partnership to create two innovation districts. The thinking is that they will attract businesses and new residents to reinvigorate Providence. One innovation district, on land where the city took down a highway, will focus on biotech, tech, and design, and will feature Brown’s School of Professional Studies, a co-working space for entrepreneurs, and a hotel, among other amenities. The second, on former industrial land near the Woonasquatucket River, will be oriented toward the arts, food, and makerspaces.

From the mayor’s perspective, the decentralized nature of colleges can make it difficult to know what to expect from them as partners. A single point person or central office to coordinate logistics and other details of joint projects

can help, Elorza says. Engaging new partners, directing them to appropriate departments and faculty members, and maintaining relationships with local business and civic leaders all take time and effort.

Wiewel, of Lewis & Clark, has studied urban planning and local partnerships as a sociologist. He suggests two key principles to guide them.

**Partnerships should serve all the players.** Businesses, nonprofits, and local government agencies will approach colleges with a vast range of ideas. Colleges should be sure their interests are also reflected in any deal. “The best partnerships are those where



NICK DENTAMARO, BROWN U.

Providence, R.I., is creating two innovation districts in partnership with eight colleges and two health-care companies.

there is clearly mutual benefit,” Wiewel says. Something that feels like charity on either side is less likely to last. Payment from a company’s research or marketing budget, rather than its philanthropic arm, is a good sign, he says. And colleges should shape collaborations to serve their education, research, and public-service missions.

**Catalog and evaluate projects.** Individual faculty members and departments develop their own longstanding partnerships and short-term projects with many local partners. Tracking those collaborations, as well as broader institutional ones, can help a college evaluate their impact and prove their value to local stakeholders. Raising awareness of the efforts and their benefits can also spark more to form.

## REDEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

An institution’s history or mission may spur it to drive positive changes in the community. Many colleges also carry the mantle of being the dominant employer or property owner in the area.

So-called anchor institutions have become increasingly important to local economies, largely because of trends related to globalization: the decline of the manufacturing industry, the rise of the service sector, and public fiscal crises, according to Community-Wealth.org, which is run by the Democracy Collaborative, a research and consulting organization. C-W’s recommendations for colleges as anchor institutions include:

- Hiring a greater percentage of the work-force locally.
- Providing work-force training to local residents.
- Incubating small businesses.
- Leveraging real-estate development to promote local retail, employer-assisted housing, and community land trusts.

That final point is where many disputes arise. Behind many colleges’ altruistic impulses is concern about the condition of local neighborhoods and its effect on student and faculty

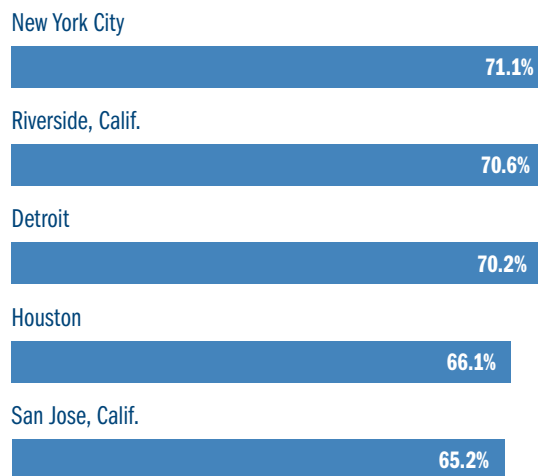
recruitment. Pushing redevelopment that prioritizes institutional interests can be tempting.

When the University of Cincinnati began an urban-revitalization effort in the mid-1990s, it formed seven community develop-

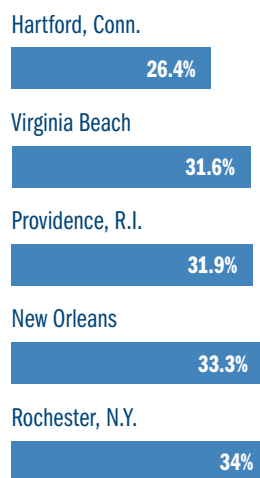
## WHETHER GRADUATES STICK AROUND

Educational attainment is often linked to the affluence of metropolitan areas. Among large metros, here are the leaders and laggards at retaining four-year-college grads.

### Metro areas with best retention rate



### Metro areas with worst retention rate



Note: The rankings reflect the researchers’ recalculations for Phoenix to exclude the University of Phoenix’s largely online enrollment.  
Source: “The U.S. Cities Winning the Battle Against Brain Drain,” CityLab, March 15, 2016

ment corporations — one for each of the neighborhoods around campus — and gave local residents a majority of seats on each of the advisory boards. Those early moves were crucial to the success of the project, campus officials say. For starters, people felt like they had a prominent voice in the direction of the redevelopment. Also, each community had a different character, and their representatives could reflect that.

Managing public perceptions takes work, and clear communication and close listening are crucial, says Matt Bourgeois, director of the Clifton Heights Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation, one of the neighborhood boards. “The concern was that just by throwing money at the problem, the university could be perceived as the hundred-pound gorilla,” he says. “‘We’re essentially going to take you over’ — that is the perception they wanted to avoid.”

Being transparent had drawbacks, in that it drove up real-estate prices as the university sought to acquire land. Another perception: “that the university had really deep pockets,” says Robert Ambach, senior vice president for administration and finance. And so the institution used that to drive negotiations, offering greater investment if a community group was willing to compromise on project design.

The university took \$150 million out of its endowment to buy or invest in properties, and over the years, private developers invested more than \$260 million. Strolling down streets around the campus, you can now find Panera, Target, and

## 3 Principles for Town-Gown Projects (of Any Size)



Luanne Greene

“If I think back to the '90s and even the '80s, the town-gown relationship was more that colleges tended to circle the wagons and worry about what was inside their realm,” says Luanne Greene, president of the Baltimore-based architecture and planning firm Ayers Saint Gross. “What was outside was outside.” But times have changed, she says. “I can’t think of an institution that’s thinking that way any more.”

Now colleges and their communities assume that what’s good for one is good for the other, Greene says. “They are thinking collaboratively, small liberal-arts colleges as well as big giants that almost create their own weather — the Ohio States and the Purdues of the world.”

In the coming years, she says, campus officials should watch for several trends:

### **Development partners will continue to be an important part of colleges’ campus planning.**

Historically, such private partnerships have focused on either student-housing projects (now ubiquitous) or research environments (such as the Cortex Innovation Community, in St. Louis, or the Jewelry District, in Providence, R.I.). But Greene sees more blurring of lines ahead. After all, she says, city-building is at the core of any capital project: finding the right scale for structures, attracting lively ground-floor retail, and assuring population density that supports transit and other services in demand.

### **Cities and colleges will have to figure out how to handle transit challenges and the advent of autonomous vehicles together.**

Communities and institutions will also need to collaborate on crucial energy issues, she says — like limiting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of distribution systems.

### **The common thread will be compaction: keeping people and ideas close to each other.**

Whether it’s the crossroads of urban and campus development or the future of transportation, utility infrastructure, or buildings, compaction is essential, Greene says, to “that classic college-town intellectual buzz.”



Urban Outfitters. But the university also tried to support local retailers, working with the city to offer grants of \$10,000 or more to spruce up storefronts.

In Baltimore, what happened to the Middle East neighborhood that hugs the back of the Johns Hopkins Hospital — whether it has been resurrected and rebranded or overpow-

ered and obliterated — depends on who's telling the story.

It had been a rough part of the city, with drugs, crime, and many rowhomes boarded up or torn down, like broken teeth in a smile. Johns Hopkins University saw Middle East as a liability, for the recruitment and safety of students and employees, and as an opportu-

## The Urban Setting: an Asset and an Obligation



Alan Mallach

### An urban location is now an asset.

Thirty or 40 years ago, most presidents of urban universities probably at least idly speculated on the possibility of leaving their cities. Today being in a city has become an incredibly powerful asset for universities, as well as their being an asset for the city.

The universities that were built in suburban locations, or in areas that don't happen to be near downtown, have been trying to re-create that type of walkable, mixed-use environment adjacent to their campuses, because they realize that is the experience their students and faculty are looking for.

**T**o understand the evolving relationship between colleges and cities, Alan Mallach looks backward and forward. A nationally known city planner and advocate, Mallach is a senior fellow at the Center for Community Progress, a nonprofit group dedicated to property revitalization, where he focuses on housing and economic development. Here are three of his key insights for higher education, as told to *The Chronicle*.

### Institutions have a responsibility to their surrounding communities.

Fifty to 100 years ago, universities were not a major part of the local economy, so there was really not a lot of pressure on them — internal or external — to be more engaged. Now that universities are very much aware that they are the economic powerhouses of their cities, a sense of obligation comes with that. Think about the old industrial magnates. Most of them were just rotten bastards as human beings, but an awful lot of them had a sense of obligation to the cities and supported libraries, municipal buildings, parks, symphony halls, museums, whatever.

The universities can't wall themselves off anymore. They have to do what they can to make their cities healthier places. In a symbiotic relationship, you are as dependent on your host's health as your host is on yours.

### Administrators need to step up.

Universities — and even more so the medical facilities — could do an awful lot more in terms of providing opportunities for training, for employment, for career development for people in the low-income neighborhoods all around them. A hospital could create a system where people come in for relatively low-paying jobs that require some training, and move up into sectors where the pay is better.

Yale has provided what amounts to subsidies for more than 1,000 employees to become homeowners in the city of New Haven, a large enough number to have a significant impact on the local housing market and neighborhood conditions. These are the groundskeepers, security people, clerks, and lab techs. That enhances things not just for the city as a fiscal entity but also for the people of the city.

nity. In the early 2000s, the university, city, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation formed a redevelopment firm to tear down houses and build new residential and retail space, biotech facilities, a park, and a school. Local residents, some of whom learned about their relocation in the news, joined with activists to try to stop the project.

Ultimately, Johns Hopkins won the battle to redevelop Middle East. Residents were moved out and relocated across the city, with the promise that they could return, which some did last year. But bitterness lingers, and because marketers for the redevelopment firm thought “Middle East” had “unhelpful associations,” the neighborhood got a new name, Eager Park.

**A common frustration was that outsiders had no contact within the university, that any relationship was ad hoc.**

Most colleges don’t have a clear strategy for community relations, even for communicating with local residents, says John F. Burness, a former senior vice president for public affairs at Duke University. In a long career on several campuses, he didn’t see much engagement. “Institutions, as far as I can tell, looked at the locals as something to put up with,” he says.

At Duke, he tried to take a different approach. The university’s decadeslong investment in Durham, N.C., was fraught with issues of race and class from the start. But a collaboration with the Self-Help Credit Union, a local nonprofit that finances and promotes home ownership among low-income families, helped build relationships and

let stakeholders come together to establish common goals.

Among other strategies Burness found effective:

**Listen — and respond.** When Duke started working in Durham, the primarily African-American residents didn’t trust the university. Burness worked with a white city councilmember and a black county commissioner, who would later become mayor, to go into neighborhoods and ask questions: What are the biggest challenges facing your community? How do you see yourselves addressing them? How might Duke be a partner? Local residents released years of pent-up criticism, but Burness finally noticed breakthroughs. A common frustration was that outsiders had no contact within the university, that any relationship was ad hoc. So he founded a community-relations office that would direct any concerns or requests to the appropriate people. Messages from the university would also go through the office for public dissemination.

**Use your leverage to marshal resources.** In the 1990s and 2000s, many universities, thanks to low borrowing rates, were in a building phase. Duke used its clout with construction companies to get a new roof on a community center, for example, or fix a drainage problem at a school. The company would be named on a plaque outside the given facility, though Burness figures the work was billed back to Duke one way or another. The university also partnered with developers building downtown at a small but significant enough level that its stellar debt rating would apply to the project.

**Don’t treat the community as a PR prop.** Given socioeconomic and racial divides, Burness was always wary of trumpeting the university’s role in redevelopment. He didn’t want it to come off as opportunistic.

In fact, local partnerships can benefit all stakeholders, so long as decision makers are conscious of both institutions’ and communities’ interests. The next section will explore ambitious projects that open up a range of new opportunities.



## SECTION 3

Local residents said the Portland Aerial Tram, planned to connect two campuses of Oregon Health & Science University, would kill birds, compromise privacy, and erode property values. Today it's called "iconic."



BRIAN OVERCAST / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



# Bold Bets for the Local Community

**P**ARTNERSHIPS ABOUND in higher education, but now and then, a unique relationship forms. Perhaps someone proposes an ambitious project. Or maybe an institution and a local partner — a public entity, community group, business, or some combination thereof — come together to tackle a persistent challenge in a new way. These ventures can open up possibilities, but often they're risky, and it takes deep, sustained engagement to pull them off. Redevelopment is one common focus. The University of Maryland at College Park, for example, has worked with campus-housing developers, hotel chains, and its own foundation to remake a shabby strip opposite the main campus buildings with new restaurants, a hotel, and a co-working space.

## TAKEAWAYS

Ambitious projects require deep, sustained collaboration with local government agencies, businesses, and civic groups.

Schools are the foundation of a community, and colleges have the resources and expertise to help strengthen them.

Innovation districts can bring colleges and businesses together to spark new ideas.

Entrepreneurial campus leaders look for opportunities to serve students while generating new revenue.

Finding ways to emphasize educational and research goals is key to maintaining a community facility.

## UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PARKS, BY THE NUMBERS

# 174

university research parks in  
the U.S. and Canada in 2012

# 46%

formed since 2000

### OVER ALL

49% in suburban areas

35% in urban areas

16% in rural areas

23% in distressed communities

45% in urban areas in  
distressed communities

### ON AVERAGE

7 buildings

250,000 square feet

26 resident organizations

850 employees

Note: All items other than the total of 174 university research parks reflect 108 of them responding to a survey.

Source: "Driving Regional Innovation and Growth: The 2012 Survey of North American University Research Parks," Association of University Research Parks (AURP) and Battelle Technology Partnership Practice

The research park is another approach. Some date back decades, like the Stanford Industrial Park, which was established in 1951 and incubated prominent Silicon Valley firms like Hewlett-Packard. In the past 15 years, dozens more research parks have opened as higher-education institutions — urban universities in particular — have come under increasing pressure to be economic drivers.

"The university has to become more entrepreneurial," says Costas Spirou, senior associate provost at Georgia College and State University, who is writing a book about research parks and innovation districts. "It has to engage with the urban environment," he says. "Innovation, commercialization of knowledge, creating a cluster or nodes to advance its mission and relevancy all fall within that context."

Whatever form a project takes, it forces campus officials to consider many issues at once. Costs, economic impact, environmental impact, transportation, housing, sightlines, and neighborhood concerns are only some of those.

Consider the construction of the Portland Aerial Tram, a gondola that connects the mountaintop campus of the Oregon Health & Science University with a campus 500 feet below, on an old industrial site on the banks of the Willamette River. Planners for the new campus, the land for which was purchased in 2001, realized that cars traveling between the two locations would jam the roads in south Portland. And so administrators resolved to build a tram to carry people back and forth high up in the air.

The waterfront campus was already controversial for the views it could block, but debate over the tram was even more contentious. The cost ballooned from \$15 million to \$57 million before the project was done, in 2006. Residents on the mountainside believed the tram would kill birds, compromise their privacy, and erode property values. University officials say that a major project can bring to the surface a broad

range of concerns: the fate of open space, patronage of minority-owned businesses, balance of properties on tax rolls, even the health of salmon runs.

“One of the things about developing in a dynamic, progressive urban environment like Portland is that there's all kinds of values out there that ultimately get wrapped into the deal,” says Mark B. Williams, who as vice president for campus development and administration directed the development of the new campus. His most important strategy was to keep the lines of communication open and active.

“Universities have a tendency to retreat to their ivory tower, put their plans together, maybe talk to a few significant people, and then announce their plans and move for-

**“Universities have a tendency to retreat to their ivory tower, put their plans together, maybe talk to a few significant people, and then announce their plans and move forward.”**

**“People were sick of hearing from us, which was a much better place to be in terms of trying to push this thing through.”**

ward,” he says. “We learned that we really had to engage with the public, with interest groups, with both proponents and opponents at a much more significant level. People were sick of hearing from us, which was a much better place to be in terms of trying to push this thing through.”

Today the tram, called “iconic” by the local media, stands as one of the most striking elements in a city devoted to new modes of public transportation. More than a million people rode it in its first year, and the university expanded by more than a million square feet on the waterfront site. That development coincided with the construction of about 3,000 housing units along the river, representing more tax revenue for the city. Along the way, the university built more-positive relationships with its neighbors, says Williams. Negotiations and discussions now tend to start as a collaboration, he says, rather than a standoff.

The following profiles detail other projects that represent broad thinking by institutions of various sizes and types about their place in the community. How did those projects develop, and what did they need to succeed?



# A School for '3 to Ph.D.'

**What:** Faubion School, a pre-K-to-eighth-grade school with a holistic model

**Who:** Concordia University (Ore.), Portland Public Schools, Kaiser Permanente, Trillium Family Services, Basics market

**Why:** To nurture students from the city's neediest families

**E**DUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY is vital to a thriving city. And while entrepreneurial Portland, Ore., is doing well in many respects, some neighborhoods, as anywhere, are down and out. That's especially true on the north side, near old industrial sites, where the population is less white and Concordia University, a private liberal-arts institution, for years shared a corner with a run-down elementary and middle school.

That geography led the university and local school system to come together with several companies and foundations to plan a new school. The idea was to put — under one roof — students in kindergarten through eighth grade, the university's college of education, an early-childhood center, a medical and dental clinic, a low-cost food club, and other services for students and their families.

The ties between the university and the school formed between two people. When a new principal arrived at the school and found herself overwhelmed by the building's deterioration and students' needs, an education professor at Concordia approached her to offer support. Initially, the university helped to set up an arts program for the school, but Gary Withers, president of the Concordia University Foundation, saw an opportunity that could excite donors.

He recalled that Judith Ramaley, a former president of Portland State University, where he had spent part of his career, once lobbied to put its school of education on the top floor of an elementary school. But the plans were never realized. What if Concordia, he



The new Faubion School, which opened in 2017, promotes holistic education and features a health clinic and food club for students and their families.



ANDREA LONAS

thought, could integrate its education department with a new, state-of-the-art school next door?

“The strongest opportunity, from a philanthropic standpoint or for community engagement, was to make sure that we had a very deep and integrated collaboration,” Withers says. The project emerged with a tagline, “3 to Ph.D.,” to signal the learning at all levels that would take place there and the goal of lifting children’s prospects to “break the cycle of generational poverty and inequality,” per the school’s website.

Concordia and Portland Public Schools found partners in the health-care company Kaiser Permanente, as well as a local provider of mental- and behavioral-health services and a local supermarket chain. The university and the school system asked them to commit for the long haul, with little to no chance of profiting directly from the project.

“It wasn’t a thing where you could just drop in for six months or a year,” says Kevin Matheny, chief development officer for Concordia’s foundation. “You can’t build trust if people are coming and going all the time,” he says. “People lose faith real quick, and they’ve been damaged enough up here in this part of Portland by people saying, ‘Yeah, we’ll help you,’ and then they come and go. You have got to be all in.”

The two main partners came up with \$48 million — \$33 million from a school bond and \$15 million from the university and its donors — and planned to demolish the old building and replace it with a 138,000-square-foot new facility. The roof of the old gymnasium collapsed before demolition started.

The new Faubion School, which opened in 2017, would be the envy of

any public system. Portland’s cloudy sunshine filters through skylights into open spaces, an architectural element based on research showing that students learn better in environments with ample natural light. Along the hallways, decorated with pictures of Martin Luther King Jr. colored by each student and mounted on construction paper, teachers’ and professors’ offices are intermingled to encourage collaboration on research and teaching methods. Concordia’s education students have many opportunities for experiential learning as they work with children on a range of activities.

The school promotes holistic education with a nurturing approach. The medical and dental clinic, supported by Kaiser Permanente, gives Faubion students and their family members (along with Concordia students) access to free visits without having to get across town. Basics, a supermarket chain founded by the former owners of a line of organic foods, has a store on site offering discounted prices to students, families, and staff members. Donated items are collected, bagged, and distributed to the neediest families at the store. The school also features a community kitchen for cooking demonstrations.

One challenge for the future stems from the success of Faubion and the transformative promise of its model. In line with its mission, the school is designated for children from the city’s lowest-income families, and it’s already overenrolled, serving almost 1,000 children from preschool through eighth grade, more than 80 percent of whom are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

It’s up to Portland Public Schools to determine which students get to benefit from this partnership.



# A Hub for Collaboration

**What:** Urban innovation district

**Who:** University of Cincinnati, with other local anchor institutions and a growing list of corporate partners, including Procter & Gamble and Kroger

**Why:** To connect the university and industry “to spark more groundbreaking ideas and solve today’s most complex problems”

**C**ITIES ARE hot spots for innovation because of the collisions of talents, specialties, and ideas that happen there. Colleges may be notoriously siloed, but some are setting

up interdisciplinary, multi-use spaces where faculty members, students, and local residents can come together and dream up new projects.

Two decades ago, the University of Cincinnati was transforming itself

from a local commuter college into a nationally recognized institution. Now it is developing an innovation district that officials hope will be a new “front door” for the university and a key contributor to work-force





The University of Cincinnati's 1819 Innovation Hub is meant to connect higher education and industry and contribute to local work-force development.

development in the city (the Silicon Valley of Cincinnati, some say).

The project's first building is a renovated Sears warehouse in a neighborhood just east of the campus. The 1819 Innovation Hub,



BRAD FEINKNOPF



The Innovation Hub features a prototyping facility, collaboration spaces, and a venture lab to incubate startup ideas.

BRAD FEINKNOPF

named for the year the university was founded, now houses technology and innovation offices for the Kroger grocery company and Cincinnati Bell, a communications company; CincyTech, a technology investor; and the Live Well Collaborative, a partnership between the university, Procter & Gamble, and other major companies, focused on consumer goods and services for aging baby boomers. The building also includes meeting rooms and a 12,000-square-foot makerspace for prototypes.

The building's design, with glass walls and open spaces, is meant to promote chance encounters and serendipitous collaborations. "One of the things that's really important for talent is having a place," says David Adams, the university's chief innovation officer, who is guiding the development of the district.

For example, maybe an insurance company that moves to the innovation hub is interested in drone technology to quickly assess hurricane damage. That could draw on the university's experts in computer-hardware engineering, artificial intelligence, climatology, and public health.

"Getting university departments

to work together is a nontrivial exercise," Adams says. "We're going to bring faculty researchers together in a very real way to work across those disciplines and solve these problems."

The University of Cincinnati plans to make the Innovation Hub part of a complex — think next-generation research park — that will be built out by 2021. Next up, with construction now in the planning stages, is the Digital Futures building, a 180,000-square-foot facility dedicated to research and industry related to urban challenges like food and water supply, transportation, energy, education, and the economy.

The university and its health system are two of several anchor institutions contributing to the development of the city's Uptown Innovation Corridor. Leaders of Cincinnati Children's Hospital, the Cincinnati Zoo, and another health system, TriHealth, formed a consortium in 2004 to revitalize parts of the city. Adams has cited as models the Pittsburgh Innovation District, in the city's Oakland neighborhood, near Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh, as well as Kendall Square, in Cambridge, Mass., near the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.





# A Small College's Entrepreneurial Spirit

**What:** Sky Lodge

**Who:** Unity College and the Couri Foundation

**Why:** To create “revenue-generating manifestations” of the curriculum and to support the local community

**U**NITY COLLEGE, in rural central Maine, is neither big nor wealthy, with about 800 students and an endowment of \$15 million. Still, Melik Peter Khoury, Unity’s president, has set it on a mission of regional economic development. That effort comes in part from a desire to blur the boundaries between college and commerce.

“Why can corporations have education arms, and education can’t have business arms?” Khoury asks. “We need real-life, revenue-generating manifestations of our curriculum.” His plan: to build upon what he calls the college’s “community-based-learning approach.”

About five years ago, a donor gave the college Half Moon Gardens, a greenhouse on 20 acres, with tractors,





When presented with the possible donation of an old hunting-and-fishing lodge, the president of Unity College, in rural Maine, “did not look at it as overhead, but as an investment.”

UNITY COLLEGE

irrigation systems, and solar panels. Another donor gave money to support the property for five years, while the college figured out how to turn it into a money-making enterprise. Unity renamed the facility McKay Farm and Research Station and made it a laboratory for students to learn techniques and business practices in sustainable farming.

Today the farm is no longer supported by tuition revenue. It grows food for the college’s dining hall and ornamental plants for the campus. Professors at Unity have secured grants to grow American-chestnut

trees — devastated by blight — and experiment with biofuel-heating systems in the greenhouse. The farm is also a resource for local residents, who can buy fresh produce or rent plots to grow food in the winter.

The project was a test case that has paved the way for other ventures. When New England philanthropists John and Elaine Couri approached Unity and nearby colleges seeking to donate an old hunting-and-fishing lodge they had run primarily on a nonprofit basis, Khoury saw another opportunity. About 90 minutes from the campus, Sky Lodge sits on 154

acres with 16 buildings, including a conference center and a half-dozen cabins. The president was thinking not only of Unity’s outdoor programs and course excursions, but also of building a revenue-generating community asset.

“We were the only institution that did not look at it as overhead, but as an investment,” Khoury says. And it had McKay Farm to point to. In 2018 the Couri Foundation donated the property to Unity College, along with start-up funds and three years of financial support.

In the fall of 2019, Unity will unveil a program for first-year students to spend a couple of weeks at Sky Lodge focused on team building and problem solving — some of the soft skills in demand in the labor market. Graduate students will be able to use the property for experiential learning in geographic information systems, conservation law enforcement, and other fields.

The lodge, located about 12 miles from the Canadian border, will also become an ecotourism site, wedding venue, conference center, and seasonal outpost for snowmobilers and fishermen. Unity will employ students there, giving them practical experience aligned with programs in sustainable business and tourism, wildlife biology, and adventure therapy.

The lodge now produces \$300,000 in revenue annually, Khoury says, and runs at a deficit. But it is on track to bring in \$800,000 annually — and a modest profit — in three to five years, he says.

Unity hopes that the lodge’s new incarnation will help support not just the college but also the Moose River area, around the lodge. “Students go to the local grocery store, the local gas station, the local restaurants,” Khoury says. “It’s one way that we can bring some economic drivers to these local communities, given the little college we are.”



**What:** Small regional airport

**Who:** Ohio State University, the Austin E. Knowlton Foundation, and a growing list of corporate partners

**Why:** To support education and research in aviation and to serve local industry

# A Site for the Future of Flight



OHIO STATE U.

Ohio State University had considered selling off its airport, but instead has emphasized the facility's education and research missions, as well as its benefits to the community.

**F**LYING AROUND the country in a private plane or corporate jet might seem like a rich way to travel, but the small regional airports that serve those aircraft often operate with slim margins.

Ohio State University's airport, located about 12 miles north of downtown Columbus, is no different.

Doug Hammon, the airport's director, says small airfields like his often float on sales of fuel and services tied to daily flights. When the recession hit in 2008, companies cut back on air travel, sending the terminal's budget into the red.

"That's just the way aviation is," says Hammon. "It took 10 years to

get back to where we were the month before the recession."

Because of that volatility, the university regularly ponders whether to sell off the airport, he says. But so far officials have decided to hold on to the facility, one of fewer than 30 university airports nationally. It ranks third in the state in take-offs and

landings and serves large and small businesses, government officials, and celebrities, as well as students training in related fields.

Services to local corporations — “rich people getting on airplanes,” as Hammon puts it — regularly raise tensions about who the airport is for. “That’s why we really push and focus on the role of the airport in the university first and foremost,” he says, “with its role in the community as a side benefit.”

In fact, Ohio State recently reaffirmed its commitment to operating the airport with a brand-new 29,000-square-foot terminal featuring classrooms, research space, and faculty offices. The construction was supported by a \$10-million grant from the local Austin E. Knowlton Foundation and a \$1.2-million gift from a private-jet company.

The airport provides a vital living laboratory for students in aviation studies, mechanical and aerospace engineering, and even geography, city planning, and business. The facility also supports research and testing on the future of human transport: flying cars. Some companies are already working with Ohio State to experiment with autonomous flying vehicles, which will have test phases there.

“We talk a lot about how the airport is a campus of its own,” Hammon says. “We do the teaching, we do the research, we do the outreach. There are things that we can do here that those users from campus would not be able to do if we were not owned by the university.” For example, one academic program set up a new radar system within 90 days, he says, when it might have taken years to work through the bureaucracy of one of the larger airports in the area.

Ohio State’s airport contributed about \$157 million to the local economy in 2012, according to the university’s most recent estimate. And its new terminal includes meeting space marketed for rental to corporations. The pitch is to fly clients in, have a meeting catered by the university’s food service, then fly them out. Hammon also hopes to draw about a dozen corporations to set up hangars on site, which would provide steady operating revenue.

Office parks and corporate headquarters line the freeway in nearby Dublin, Ohio, and business leaders there still find the facility easier to access than Columbus’s main airport, on the city’s east side. According to Hammon, Dave Thomas, the found-

er of Wendy’s, located its corporate headquarters in Dublin in part for its proximity to the airport.

The grounds are also valuable for some unexpected uses. Ohio State’s agriculture school grazes cows there, and the airport is converting some grass fields to wildflowers, clover, and other pollinator plants to lower maintenance costs, decrease its carbon footprint, and serve an apiary on site. The land has room for solar power, which could help support university research in energy and electric vehicles. And the airfield is home to a local medical-airlift service co-owned by the university’s medical center.

In the last several years, as the economy recovered, so did the airport’s revenues. “We’re break-even now,” says Hammon. “It’s good to be back there.” The facility is in the midst of master planning for the future.

Meanwhile, with an observation deck added to the new terminal, the airport has become a local attraction. Parents often take their kids there to watch planes take off and land. And a diner on the site, run by an alumnus of the university’s aviation-management program, is said to have one of the best breakfasts in the state.



**A brand-new 29,000-square-foot terminal building helps make the airport a living laboratory.**

OHIO STATE U.

# What's Ahead

In 1950, 30 percent of the world's population lived in cities. Today it's more than 50 percent. By midcentury, two-thirds of people will live in urban areas, as they expand into megacities that transform suburbs and urbanize broad swaths of land. The United States is projected to grow by more than 100 million people in the next 30 years, mostly through migration, and many will settle in the sprawling metro regions.

Small towns and rural areas, meanwhile, may continue to depopulate — and they will have to look for new ways to attract permanent residents and businesses to support that idyllic American life.

Colleges have stakes in both settings. To attract students, professors, and staff members will require figuring out how to make living in York, Neb. (home of York College), or Sheridan, Wyo. (home of Sheridan College), dynamic — and how to make living in a hot city like Seattle or Washington affordable.

Community and economic development is another major consideration. Colleges have opportunities in both small towns and big cities to engage local residents and leaders, to form mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses and nonprofits, and generally to invest in the vitality of a place, even if the payoffs are distant or unclear. To run savvy campus operations and be responsible anchor institutions, colleges will have to deal with a range of complex, interconnected economic, cultural, and environmental issues.

**Sustainability and the ascendancy of cities:** Sustainability is about not only the environ-

ment, but the human civilization that depends on it. And the compaction of people and services might be the most efficient way to live, given how population density can support economic activity, conserve land, and cut down on the use of fuel for transportation. But cities still consume vast resources, and most have not adequately planned to confront the challenges of the future, in energy, food, water, and infrastructure.

**Colleges can serve as a living laboratory, adopting new strategies to use renewable power, for example, and local food.**

In that sense, colleges can serve as a living laboratory, adopting new strategies to use renewable power, for example, and local food. The University of Maine system, at its students' request, worked with a third-party provider to source local food and support the state's growers. Institutions' positions on green building, storm water, and waste can start trends and influence policy regionally.



Research will be key to broader adaptation to environmental stresses. And colleges in both urban and rural settings will have ample opportunities to engage their communities and solve problems. Wellington (Duke) Reiter, an urban-planning adviser at Arizona State University, envisions partnerships and an exchange of ideas among cities and institutions on the Interstate 10 corridor, which runs from Los Angeles to Jacksonville, Fla. Along the way, Phoenix, El Paso, San Antonio, New Orleans, and Tallahassee all feel pressure to prepare for droughts, floods, or other natural disasters, and to use energy and land more efficiently. Reiter formed a group called Ten Across (10X) to experiment and innovate. “We’re thinking about our context both in terms of the campus, and then the city and the region,” he says, “but also even in the larger spectrum.”

**The “hollowing out” of rural areas:** Colleges in small towns have a vital role to play in preserving their communities, which face both demographic and socioeconomic challenges. In many cases, relatively well-resourced colleges can have an outsized impact on small towns or rural areas, if they manage to attract new industries and support infrastructure projects.

The eight-year Oberlin Project, conceived by David Orr, an environmental-studies professor at Oberlin College, brought solar power to town, set up a green arts district with an energy-efficient hotel, and strengthened connections to local farmers. The project concluded in 2017, with many of its goals accomplished, but Orr always had a broader vision. He saw

Oberlin as a node in a crescent that stretched from Cleveland through Toledo to Detroit, with colleges and universities working together to create a vibrant local economy in the old Rust Belt.

**Colleges in rural areas could do more to engage local children and families, recruit nearby, and retain or attract new graduates to stop the brain drain.**

Outside cities, the struggle is about education as much as the economy, as the two are linked. In *Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America*, the sociologists Patrick J. Carr and Maria J. Kefalas point out that small towns often end up pushing out their “best and brightest.” Colleges in rural areas could do more to engage local children and families, recruit nearby, and retain or attract new graduates to stop the brain drain.

Many college towns are blue specks in red

states, and some institutions have tried to foster discussion on the challenges facing the country. Colorado College and the United States Air Force Academy, both in Colorado Springs, have sponsored the Democratic Dialogue Project, which brings together liberals and conservatives, forcing them out of their political bubbles. Many colleges, particularly in California, have played a role in supporting immigrant students — and by extension, their families. “Academic institutions and polarized communities will need to build on deep listening and honest conversation to create new relationships of trust, action, and problem solving across their purple seams,” David Scobey, director of Bringing Theory to Practice, a national initiative that supports civic engagement, has written in *The Chronicle*.

**The economic divide and cost of housing:** The country as a whole has seen a trend toward increasing inequality and diminished social mobility. Today, thanks to the cost of housing and access to quality schools, much of the population is geographically sorted by class — or scraping to get by in increasingly expensive areas.

Colleges need to employ janitors along with engineers and surgeons. The widening income gap and rising cost of living in many cities present stark challenges, but also opportunities for campus leaders. A housing allowance, for example, could support lower-paid staff members and reduce turnover. Some well-heeled institutions — like Yale University — have established housing allowances and a home-buyer program as employee benefits. In pricey Palo Alto, Calif., where RV dwellers have lined a local highway

known as El Camino Real, Stanford University recently announced that it would invest \$3.4 billion in developing more than 2,000 housing units for its work force, with about a quarter of them offered at below-market rates. The university, which has been under pressure over the impact of a major planned expansion, will also put more than \$1 billion into sustainable transportation options to help employees get to work and cut down on the area’s infamous congestion.

Other urban and suburban institutions should consider working with local officials and developers on affordable housing. Meanwhile, colleges in farther-flung areas might look for ways to market their communities as pleasant, affordable alternatives to cities, where someone can buy a 100-year-old mansion for a song. That may mean working to establish services and amenities for students, faculty, and staff members who come.

Access to education is crucial to bridging the economic divide. Colleges should invest in public school systems and continuing-education programs to expand opportunities and win more public support.

In the years ahead, connections between colleges and communities will only become more complex — and essential. Local governments, businesses, and civic groups will have their own agendas, and perhaps approach campus officials more often for support. Colleges, for their part, should operate with a sense of responsibility and enlightened self-interest, seeking and shaping partnerships that further their educational and research missions, boost their finances, and advance their reputations in the community and beyond.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Cultivate community-oriented leadership**

Where colleges once literally or figuratively walled themselves off from the cities and towns around them, they now must engage — and that drive has to come from the top. Strong relationships depend on boards, presidents, and senior administrators who understand local challenges and needs and take a systems-oriented approach to problem solving. Considering the impact on local residents is particularly important in redevelopment and in public safety.

### **Use your leverage**

Colleges can command vast resources and have deep contacts in local government, business, and philanthropy. Harness those advantages for the good of the surrounding community. Tackling projects that matter to local residents can also advance an institution's standing and ease any future negotiations. In essential activities like purchasing, housing, and other capital projects, look for ways to benefit neighbors and the local economy.

### **Communicate broadly and strategically**

Administrators who have led successful projects consistently note that direct, frequent communication with local stakeholders is the most effective way to build support and momentum. Colleges should have an administrator or office to route feedback from the local community to the appropriate people within the institution, and also to help craft and distribute messages outside.

### **Stay focused on mission**

City governments, private partners, and nonprofits are all eager to work with colleges on a vast range of activities, and administrators should make sure any partnerships align with the institution's own educational, research, and public-service goals. Collaborations like redevelopment projects, business ventures, and service-learning opportunities are more effective if they serve the mission and provide mutual benefits. Colleges can be clear about their values and choose partners committed to them.

### **Be a test bed**

Colleges have an opportunity to explore the cutting edge of technologies and practices that will help sustain the cities of the future. Independent efforts or partnerships to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, develop emerging forms of transportation, or advance public health can be tested and evaluated in the living laboratories of campuses and their surrounding communities. Just be careful not to treat local residents as guinea pigs.

### **Build on a human scale**

For decades, planners built cities around the automobile, a trend that sapped the vitality of communities. Colleges, which tend to be denser and more verdant spaces, are poised to help create similarly walkable districts that can support local businesses and draw more (especially younger) residents who prefer pedestrian-oriented environments. Blurring the boundary between the campus and the surrounding city or town can help attract students and faculty members, as well as serve sustainability goals.

## Resources

*The American College Town*, by Blake Gumprecht, University of Massachusetts Press, 2008

“Anchoring the Community: The Deepening Role of Urban Universities,” Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, 2016

“Cities: A Special Issue,” *The Chronicle Review*, July 27, 2017

*The City as Campus: Urbanism and Higher Education in Chicago*, by Sharon Haar, University of Minnesota Press, 2011

“The College President as Urban Planner,” by Scott Carlson, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 24, 2010

*The Divided City: Poverty and Prosperity in Urban America*, by Alan Mallach, Island Press, 2018

“Economic Impact Guidelines,” Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and Association of American Universities, 2014

“The Economic Impact of Universities: Evidence From Across the Globe,” by Anna Valero and John Van Reenen, National Bureau of Economic Research, August 2016

“Field Guide for Urban University-Community Partnerships,” by Michaela Accardi and Joshua J. Yates, Thriving Cities Lab, 2019

“The Foundational Role of Universities as Anchor Institutions in Urban Development: A Report of National Data and Survey Findings,” by Debra Friedman, David Perry, and Carrie Menendez, Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, 2014

“Gentrify or die? Inside a university’s controversial plan for Baltimore,” by Siddhartha Mitter, *The Guardian*, April 18, 2018

*The Hidden Potential of Sustainable Neighborhoods: Lessons from Low-Carbon Communities*, by Harrison Fraker, Island Press, 2013

“Its City Was Hurting. The Schools Were Strapped. So This University Took Charge,” by Steven Johnson, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 10, 2019

“Portland State U. Ties Its Fortunes to Those of Its Quirky City,” by Scott Carlson, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 11, 2013

“President to President: Mastering University-Community Partnerships,” Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, 2012

“Town-Gown Collaboration in Land Use and Development,” by Yesim Sungu-Eryilmaz, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2009

*Trains, Buses, People: An Opinionated Atlas of U.S. Transit*, by Christof Spieler, Island Press, 2018

*Universities and their Cities: Urban Higher Education in America*, by Steven J. Diner, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017

*The University and the City: From Medieval Origins to the Present*, edited by Thomas Bender, Oxford University Press, 1988

“Urban Universities: Anchors Generating Prosperity for America’s Cities,” Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, 2010

*Walkable City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places*, by Jeff Speck, Island Press, 2018

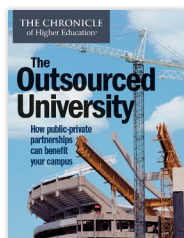
“Why Workers Without College Degrees Are Fleeing Big Cities,” by Eduardo Porter and Guilbert Gates, *The New York Times*, May 21, 2019

## Related Publications

*The Chronicle* produces a series of in-depth reports for campus leaders. Here are a few complementary titles.

### The Outsourced University

How public-private partnerships can benefit your campus

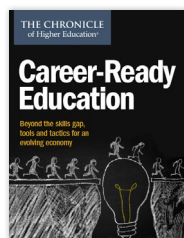


Facing heightened expectations and constrained resources, more college leaders want to focus on the academic core — teaching and research — and transfer some of

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### Career-Ready Education

Beyond the skills gap, tools and tactics for an evolving economy

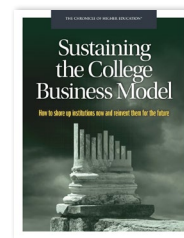


As hiring becomes more skills-based, alternative credentials gain traction, and more jobs go digital, how can the degree remain a reliable signal on the labor market? Learn how to build relationships

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