

## SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS



### INTRODUCTION

Syracuse University is driven by its vision, *Scholarship in Action*—a commitment to forging bold, imaginative, reciprocal, and sustained engagements with our many constituent communities, local as well as global. We construe SU as a public good, an anchor institution positioned to play an integral role in today’s knowledge-based, global society by leveraging a precious commodity—intellectual capital—with partners from all sectors of the economy: public, private, and non-profit. Each partner brings its strengths to the table, where collectively we address the most pressing problems facing our community. In doing so, we invariably find that the challenges we face locally resonate globally.

We understand that this represents an expansive definition of the role of a university, but as the Kellogg Commission has observed, it is incumbent upon universities today "to reshape our historic agreement with the American people so that it fits the times that are emerging instead of the times that have passed."<sup>1</sup> Today, in a world in which knowledge is paramount, we believe that we best fulfill our role as an anchor institution in our community when:

- We educate fully informed and committed citizens;
- We provide access to opportunity;
- We strengthen democratic institutions;
- We create innovation that matters, and we share knowledge generously;
- We inform and engage public opinion and debate; and
- We cultivate and sustain public intellectuals.

Serving the public good in these ways pervades our daily decision making and connects us not just with our immediate community, but with communities throughout the world. These connections vividly demonstrate for our students, faculty, staff, and community members what it means to be an educated, responsible citizen in the 21st century. However, we also know that our outward-looking

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<sup>1</sup> Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities. (2000). *Renewing the covenant: Learning, discovery, and engagement in a new age and different world*, p. 9.

engagements yield new forms of scholarship and new scholarly arrangements, propelling us forward as an academic institution. Thus, by stretching the boundaries of our campus, we not only create innovations that matter, but we test our notions of who is a scholar and what scholarship is. In short, we pursue the proverbial “double-bottom line” of doing well while doing good.

When we reflect upon our institutional history, we find that our best moments have been characterized by engagement and collaboration with practitioners and communities of experts, connecting our disciplinary excellence to professions, ideas, and problems in and of the world. We believe that the greatest challenge we face in pursuit of our vision is a strategic one. We construe *Scholarship in Action* as requiring faculty who are superb scholars and great mentors; students who are from diverse backgrounds and who are entrepreneurial in spirit; and engagement points in the world where these teachers and students can test their ideas in collaboration with others, see the global implications of local issues, and catalyze transformational discovery. With these constructs in mind, we have mapped out a strategy to advance us toward our vision that demands disciplined investment in three major areas of institutional priority:

- Faculty excellence and scholarly distinction
- Access and support for enterprising students
- Engagement with the world

We address these priorities independently, but also in concert, through projects whose goals and outcomes are intertwined, demonstrating their inherent interdependence. Throughout, we are weaving the threads of sustainability and diversity, not only into the curriculum, but into the fabric of campus life for all—embracing our role as a community that produces students who will be responsible and caring citizens of our nation and the world.

Syracuse University has a rich history of engaging the issues of the times and its surrounding community. We consider this tradition—long embedded in the scholarship of faculty members and in the work of a range of departments stretching across Academic Affairs and Student Affairs—to be a purposeful aspect of our identity as an institution today. Understanding SU as a public good in the global economy, we know that we must play the role of an anchor institution in the communities where we have a presence—an entity that is central not only to the cultural life of these communities, but an accessible source of intellectual capital and an engine of economic growth.

To fulfill this role, we are making disciplined investments at strategic locations locally, nationally, and globally, not merely for the sake of cultivating ties with communities in which SU has a presence, but to advance our other major priority areas of enhancing faculty excellence and scholarly distinction and providing access and support for enterprising students. Our engagements, then, are designed to be reciprocal partnerships that leverage our long-existing and emerging academic strengths with the strengths of our partners and communities, generating upward spirals of collaboration through which both SU’s and each partner’s activities and goals are continually elevated. We seek partners whose strengths align with the following five broad and interlocking areas.



- Key technologies: green, information, and biomedical
- Environmental sustainability
- Neighborhood and cultural entrepreneurship
- Arts, design, and technology
- Inclusive urban education

The collaborations arising out of these partnerships typically share the following characteristics.

- Cross-disciplinary teams work jointly on the projects, exercising existing connections and forging new ones.
- “Communities of experts” are formed to define, analyze, and plan approaches to the issues and problems at hand, including representatives from all sectors—university, public, private, and non-profit—as well as community members.
- Signature facilities become the physical hubs for the projects, enhancing both the sense of community among participants and the (typically) urban landscape.
- Sustainable partnerships are developed or strengthened that can extend beyond the present.

Examples of this investment strategy are found in the key projects described below in which we collaborate with partners in downtown Syracuse and its connected neighborhoods.

### **The Warehouse**

This newly renovated 135,000 square foot facility on the West Side of downtown Syracuse is a reclaimed furniture warehouse that had been a visual blight and is now one of its architectural landmarks. Here, faculty members who are architects, artists, and designers work, study, and teach every day, and collaborate in the community to redesign and revitalize the urban landscape. The Upstate: A Center for Design, Research, and Real Estate, for example, is joining forces with a neighborhood non-profit, the Chamber of



Commerce, and several corporate and city partners to conceive renovations of abandoned warehouses and turn them into the centerpiece of the Near West Side Arts, Technology, and Design Quarter (described below). Inspiration for these projects comes also from our architecture and design programs in Florence and London, where similar revitalization through design is occurring. The Warehouse may be an SU building, but it belongs to the community as well, featuring 30,000 square feet of community space, including a gallery, and serving as a site for community activities such as those facilitated through the Partnership for Better Education (see below).

### **Say Yes to Education**

This first-of-its-kind partnership with the Syracuse City School District, Say Yes to Education, Inc., and the State of New York intertwines with the Partnership for Better Education and aims at modeling transformation of an urban school system. It will provide comprehensive educational and social support systems, culminating in full-tuition scholarships for every City School District student admitted to Syracuse University, any SUNY college or university, any CUNY college, or any of our partner private colleges and universities.



## Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems

This federation of 200 firms—including scientists, engineers, and industry professionals—engages in a broad range of projects focused on improving human health and performance in built environments, clean and renewable energy sources, and the complex dynamics of our water resources. The center’s new home is emblematic of its mission: a LEED-certified “platinum” headquarters that is rising on the site of a reclaimed brownfield in downtown Syracuse.



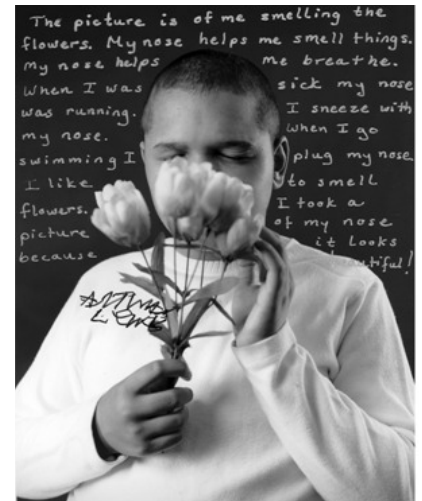
## Near West Side Initiative



SU is partnering with local foundations, corporations, and neighborhood groups to form a non-profit organization that is overseeing the multimillion-dollar revitalization of a portion of one of the country's poorest zip codes, located on the West Side of Syracuse. Now dominated by dilapidated warehouses, but including single- and multi-family homes and apartments, this area is being rejuvenated as an Arts, Technology, and Design Quarter, incorporating "green" building principles throughout. The new non-profit has begun to transform the neighborhood, leveraging funds from the partners, government, and foundation grants to renovate houses and warehouses, as well as to collaborate with the Syracuse City School District to reform neighborhood schools.

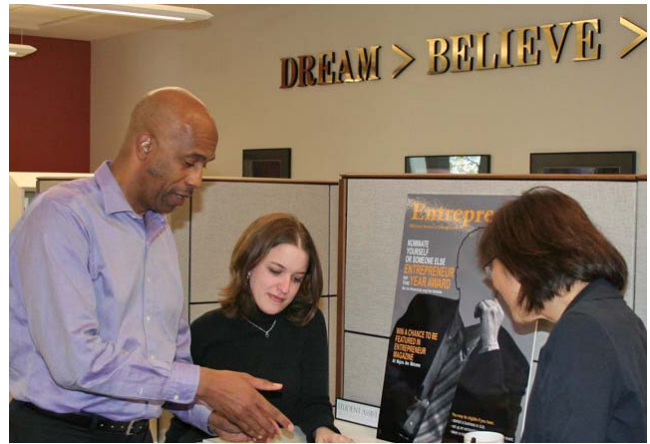
## Partnership for a Better Education (PBE)

Coordinated through the School of Education, PBE assists Syracuse City School District students to graduate and successfully pursue higher education by providing new opportunities for quality instruction through a formal working partnership between the District, Syracuse University, Le Moyne College, SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry, Onondaga Community College, SUNY Upstate Medical University, and local and national corporations. PBE fosters innovative approaches to inclusive education for students in urban schools by emphasizing literacy through the arts, business and entrepreneurship, and science and technology. Faculty members and nationally known guest artists devise and employ engaging means of drawing K-12 students into learning, while mentoring SU students in a range of fields and helping them test their knowledge in practical situations.



## South Side Innovation Center (SSIC)

A business incubator located in the center of Syracuse's South Side neighborhood, the SSIC provides office space and business support for start up businesses and budding entrepreneurs, sharing common costs and equipment to reduce the expenses incurred in starting new businesses. The incubator is a place to connect entrepreneurs with one another, with talent resources for their businesses, with investors and resource providers, with customers and markets, and with non-profits, public sector organizations and social service agencies. The SSIC provides educational programs, meeting space for the recently incorporated South Side Entrepreneurs Association, and space for student consulting teams to meet with entrepreneurs already in business.



## South Side Initiative

In 2005, SU facilitated the formation of an independent, community-based organization of emerging, neighborhood leaders from the South Side of Syracuse—an area that typifies the challenges facing diverse inner-city neighborhoods, including high crime, high unemployment, public and private disinvestment, and cyclical poverty. It must also be noted that residents of this neighborhood long felt slighted by SU, which they perceived as aloof and unwilling to share the wealth of its knowledge to benefit the community. At SU's invitation, the group, which dubbed itself the Southside Community Coalition, identified and prioritized projects that the members believe are essential to turning the



neighborhood around and putting it on a path to sustainable economic development and community-wide revitalization. The Coalition issued a formal Request for Proposals to the Syracuse University faculty to take on the projects that the Coalition determined to be of the highest priority. Each would partner faculty and students with community members. The variety of projects under way today speaks both to the thoughtful and visionary leadership being exhibited by the Coalition's members and the breadth of interest among SU's faculty to share what they know with—and learn from—the local community. Projects include:

- A multiphase plan to increase internet access dramatically through a wireless hotspot in the local library branch, expanding to a community-based Internet service provider, and, ultimately, an Electronic Village in which wireless access is available at little or no cost to businesses and residences across a wide swath of the neighborhood.
- A South Side Community Newspaper that will tell the stories of the South Side from the residents' perspectives, as opposed to the perspective of the mainstream media whose portrayals frequently are perceived by those in the neighborhood as shallow, uninformed, and biased.
- The Kuumba Project, an after-school arts academy to cultivate the artistic talent of South Side youth, whose explicit aim is to identify and train middle school students from the South Side who show conspicuous talent in the arts and prepare them for admission to the nation's top institutes in the arts upon graduation from high school—all completely free of charge.

## JPMorgan Chase-Syracuse University Partnership

This multi-faceted partnership is transcending traditional relationships to model how a leading international corporation and a major research university can collaborate for mutual benefit, as well as the public good. JPMorgan Chase is introducing SU faculty and students to its technological challenges while benefiting from their expertise and fresh perspectives. The faculty and students are learning from JPMorgan Chase executives and professionals through guest lectures, shadowing, and other exchange mechanisms. Jointly, they are developing a curriculum to ensure a supply of highly competent financial-services technology and infrastructure professionals into the future; this includes collaboration with the Syracuse City School District to inform K-12 curricula and programming so that today's urban school children will receive math and science instruction that positions them to earn a college degree and pursue rewarding careers. All of these activities are in progress, but will ultimately be facilitated through a technology center that JPMorgan Chase will build on the edge of the Syracuse University campus. JPMorgan Chase ultimately aspires to hire employees from this economically depressed neighborhood to fill the hundreds of new jobs housed at the center. This partnership leverages SU's academic strengths in four different schools—the School of Information Studies, L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science, Whitman School of Management, and the School of Education. It provides new avenues of access and support for the diverse student bodies of SU and the City School District. Finally, it enables the students and faculty to engage the world locally in ways that are applicable globally, giving them the opportunity both to field test their knowledge and contribute to work that is of demonstrable consequence.

## Connective Corridor



A signature strip of cutting-edge cultural development connecting University Hill with downtown Syracuse, the Corridor makes investments in key locations supporting historic landmarks, cultural institutions and private development in the city. These areas include the emerging arts districts along East Genesee Street and the Near Westside; Fayette-Firefighters Park and Columbus Circle; the nightlife of Armory Square; and the Civic Strip, where the Oncenter complex and the Everson Museum tie into the center of downtown. Altogether, the Corridor is home to three major universities and more than 20 arts and cultural venues. It will showcase these assets, igniting a resurgence of economic

development, tourism, and residential growth. It will feature new and imaginative lighting, public and interactive art, urban reforestation, technology hot spots, and vibrant social spaces.

## **Syracuse Campus-Community Entrepreneurship Initiative**

The Kauffman Foundation named Syracuse University as one of eight new members of their Campus Entrepreneurship Initiative. The Kauffman Initiative builds on our nationally ranked entrepreneurship program at the Whitman School and goes on to include a curriculum and research agenda that touches every one of our schools and colleges, as well as five partner institutions in our region. Through the Kauffman Initiative, we are collaborating with corporations, foundations, and government partners to nurture entrepreneurship at community sites in Syracuse. This project also serves to tie together the threads of entrepreneurship that are woven throughout our local engagement initiatives.



## **Imagining America**

SU won a national competition to become the new home of Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life—a national consortium of more than 75 colleges and universities committed to public scholarship in the arts, humanities, and design organized in 1999 and housed at the University of Michigan since then.

Imagining America was established to promote the democratic reach of the humanities, arts, and design through public scholarship and campus-community partnerships. Syracuse was chosen to lead this coalition as of July 2007 due to a number of strengths, including a diverse and deeply engaged group of interdisciplinary faculty; longstanding campus-community partnerships in the arts, such as the Community Folk Art Center, the Paul Robeson Performing Arts Company, the Point of Contact Gallery, and Syracuse Stage; and a set of new collaborative partnerships such as the Syracuse International Film & Video Festival, and the Urban Arts Education Program and Technology Center at Beauchamp Library.