

Partnerships in Pursuit of Social Justice: An Anchor Institutions Approach to Advancing Teaching and Research and Improving the Quality of Life

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Rutgers-Camden

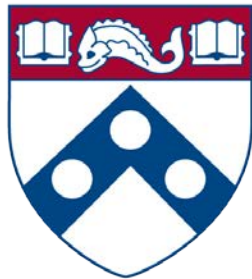
Ira Harkavy

Associate Vice President

Founding Director, Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships

University of Pennsylvania

harkavy@upenn.edu



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for Community Partnerships

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
www.nettercenter.upenn.edu

Pervasive Problems of Our Cities

- extreme poverty,
- persistent deprivation, and
- pernicious racism...

...in the shadows of powerful, relatively wealthy urban higher educational and medical institutions

A Promising Approach: *Truly* Engaged Universities

- Comprehensive, significant, serious, and sustained involvement of *all* aspects of the university with the community
 - Integration of academic and institutional resources
- Very high priority not only to significantly improving the quality of life in the local community, but also to working *with* the community respectfully, collaboratively, and democratically
- Helping to develop and implement solutions to strategic, community-identified local problems functions as a curriculum, text, *and* performance test for a truly engaged university's research, teaching, and learning activities.



Obstacles to Change

- “Prejudice in favor of ancient Customs and Habitudes.”
 - Benjamin Franklin (1789)
- Forces of commercialism and commodification
- Misplaced nostalgia for Ivory Tower traditionally elitist, traditional liberal arts
- Intellectual and institutional fragmentation
- “Communities have problems, universities have departments.”
 - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1982)

Towards an Integrated Democratic Anchor Institution-Community Partnerships Approach

Penn and The Netter Center

Founded in 1992, the Netter Center for Community Partnerships is Penn's primary vehicle for bringing to bear the broad range of human knowledge needed to solve the complex, comprehensive, and interconnected problems of the American city so that West Philadelphia (Penn's local geographic community), Philadelphia, the University itself, and society benefit.



Community & Economic Development: Inclusion and Local Workforce as Example

■ Buy Local Program

- Diversity and local supplier spend each exceed \$100 million annually
- In FY15, Penn spent \$122 million with West Philadelphia-based businesses (approximately 13.07% of total purchasing of goods and services)



■ Hire Local

- In FY15, Penn and its Health System hired 1572 local residents (47.5% of all new hires).



■ Engage Minority Owned Vendors

- 25% of contracts to minority/women owned vendors on Campus Construction of \$5 million or more

■ Skilled Workforce Development Plan

- West Philadelphia Skills Initiative (University City District): 125 unemployed residents/year trained for jobs at local anchors; 90% graduates connected to employment



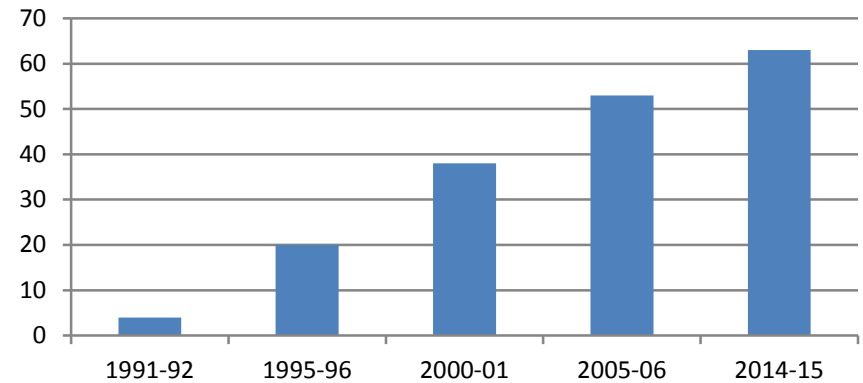
Academically Based Community Service (ABCS)

- Service rooted in and intrinsically tied to research, teaching, and learning
- Addresses universal problems as they are manifested locally through collaborative problem-solving, K-16+
- Helps students to become contributing, creative, democratic citizens

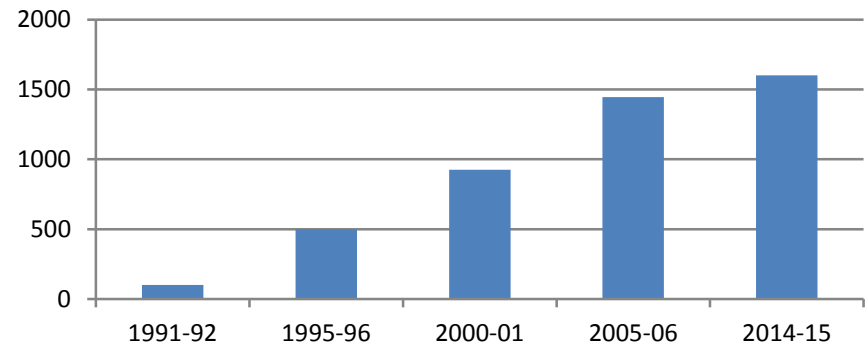


In 2016-2017, **70** ABCS courses are being taught across **8** schools, including **23** departments and programs in the School of Arts and Sciences. Approximately **1700** undergraduate and graduate students are enrolled in ABCS courses.

ABCS Courses



ABCS Students



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Helping to Solve Universal Problems as they are Manifested Locally

Development of ongoing, faculty-led projects:

- Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative
 - Frank Johnston, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology
- Urban Arts, Culture, and Humanities Partnership
 - Carol Muller, Professor of Music
- Moelis Access Science
 - Larry Gladney, Associate Dean of the Natural Sciences and Professor of Physics & Astronomy

W.E.B. Du Bois in his 1899 classic *The Philadelphia Negro* wrote that the purpose of his research was to “serve as the scientific basis of further study, and of practical reform.”



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University-Assisted Community Schools

- Builds on the work of Jane Addams and other activist feminist settlement house leaders, and John Dewey's "school as social centre"
- Focus on the school as the core institution for community engagement and democratic development
- Serve educational, social service, health, and recreational needs of students and entire community
- Engage universities as lead partners in providing academic, human, and material resources
- Improves quality of life and learning in the community while advancing the academic mission of the university



Resources and Incentives for Faculty and Staff Engagement

- Better Teaching, Learning, and Research
- Course Development Grants
- Undergraduate Teaching Assistants
- ABCS Coordinator
- Staff Coordinators in Schools and Community Organizations
- Ongoing Community Partnerships
- Transportation, Clearances and Background Checks for students



Miles to Go...

- Although these and other academic and institutional efforts are indicators of genuine progress, Penn still has a *very* long way to go to comprehensively and effectively engage and align its various components and substantial resources in democratic, sustained, mutually transformative partnerships with its community.



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Regional, National & Global Networks

- Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (1987)
- University-Assisted Community Schools Replication & Adaptation (1993)
- Anchor Institutions Task Force (2009)
 - Values-based organization:*
 - Collaboration and partnership
 - Equity and social justice
 - Democracy and democratic practice
 - Commitment to place and community
- International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy (1999)



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Lessons Learned

- Integration of research, teaching, learning and service
- Power of proximity and locality
- Democratic, mutually beneficial, long-term relationships
- Connection to institutional history – founding purpose and highest aspirations
- Movement building
- Commitment to values and superordinate goals—
democracy, equity, social justice