MAKING PARTNERSHIPS WORK:

PRINCIPLES, GUIDELINES AND ADVICE FOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITY LEADERS

AASCU American Association of State Colleges and Universities
Delivering America's Promise



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FOREWORD

State colleges and universities (SCUs) do not simply build partnerships by choice—it is a charge that remains embedded in their longstanding commitment to serving the public good. From modest partnerships with local school districts a century ago to today's complex public-private collaborations, the nature of public university partnerships has evolved tremendously. However, the spirit of SCU leaders exploring opportunities to address a wide array of challenges through collaborations with school districts, community- and faith-based groups, governments, private industry and other entities remains as strong as it has ever been. Today's partnerships not only renew the commitment of SCUs to serving the public good, but also help attract the resources, relationships and recognition necessary for these institutions to be competitive in an environment marked by declining state funding and continual questions on the value proposition of public higher education.

While partnerships have always been in the DNA of SCUs, today's complex challenges have clarified and magnified partnerships' importance and brought them to the forefront of effective campus leadership. Many challenges today cannot be solved by business, governments, community groups or universities operating alone, but could be addressed by resource alignment and collaboration. Businesses are looking to universities to help them compete in the knowledge-based global economy. State lawmakers and community leaders expect universities to be partners in researching and addressing vexing problems plaguing cities and regions. Faculty and students are looking for new opportunities for learning, research and employment, while campus leaders see partnerships as essential to carrying out their missions as stewards of place.

The volume, complexity and stakes of university partnerships have grown over the years, along with opportunities and consequences for failure. With some partnerships involving decades-long contractual obligations with millions of dollars at stake, the repercussions of failing to ask the right questions and engage the right stakeholders in the process can be devastating for campus leaders, their constituencies and confidence in the institution.

In an effort to help university leaders navigate the new era of partnerships, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) appointed a task force in 2017 of current and former college and university presidents with extensive experience in creating and maintaining university partnerships. This task force sought to a create handbook for campus leaders on this issue, including a typology of university partnerships, a full accounting of the potential costs and benefits of partnership opportunities, principles for their creation and maintenance, policy and legal considerations, and ways to create a campus culture that facilitates partnerships between universities and outside entities.

The task force created this handbook to accommodate a wide range of university partnerships. It includes classifications of partnerships, including community relationships, collaborations with other educational institutions, and public-private partnerships. It outlines the benefits of partnerships, from financial advantages and accelerated development schedules, along with the risks of partnerships, which include potentially having less control over a project and long-term contractual obligations. The report includes several principles to consider in developing and maintaining university partnerships, with critical questions to ask pertaining to each principle. It concludes with policy and legal considerations and strategies for building an institutional culture that encourages members of the campus community to explore partnership opportunities.

AASCU is proud to have long championed partnerships as part of the broader commitment to public engagement, and we hope this handbook will help university leaders critically examine and confidently pursue a broad range of partnerships. Indeed, the opportunities for universities to serve the public good through partnerships are almost unlimited today. Stakeholders are counting on public college and university leaders to identify and pursue these opportunities to grow our economy, strengthen our institutions and continue our track record of building vibrant communities for the next generation. Let's do them right.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today's Imperative for Partnerships

Meeting the evolving challenges of today's world demands that public colleges and universities creatively and effectively use their resources to serve the public good. One way of accomplishing institutional goals in this environment is through forging partnerships. These partnerships bring resources from the university and other organizations—businesses, school districts, governments, not-for-profits or other entities—together to achieve goals that would be difficult or impossible to do independently.

University partnerships are ubiquitous, diverse and certainly not new. However, the confluence of state disinvestment in public higher education combined with myriad economic, political and demographic challenges confronting states have increased the scope and intensity of university partnerships to include all aspects of the university community. For example, university partnerships have expanded beyond traditional collaborations on the campus physical plant and administrative management to include partnerships related to teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment. The new landscape of partnerships does not mean that members of the university community will compromise their principles, but recognizes that these collaborations will be an integral component of university operations.

Typical Types of University Partnerships

There is a diverse range of partnerships in higher education today, from low-risk and less prominent, such as some community partnerships, to high-risk, high-profile public-private partnerships (P3s) that include decades-long contractual obligations and millions of dollars. Three types of partnerships are 1) community partnerships, with a variety of economic and non-economic goals that can involve a range of points of contact on campus; 2) partnerships with other educational institutions, such as agreements with P-12 schools and consortia with other universities; and 3) P3s, which encompass a broad collection of arrangements between universities and the private sector, such as land development and online educational programs.

Benefits of Partnerships

Partnerships can provide numerous benefits for public colleges and universities, such as providing resources to speed the completion of a key campus project. These collaborations can also free up the university's resources from activities that are not central to its mission, while providing outside expertise to help the university achieve its goals. Partnerships can also create opportunities for research and learning experiences for faculty and students, and help build relationships leading to employment opportunities for students and alumni. Lastly, partnerships can create avenues for public universities to deliver on their missions as stewards of place, whether it involves strengthening P-12 education systems or helping local businesses grow.

Risks of Partnerships

The risks posed by university partnerships are as varied as the partnerships themselves, and the university's reputation can be impacted adversely with a failed venture. Risk analysis and scenario planning must be central to the deliberative process, and potential partners need to invest a substantial amount of time in planning, performing due diligence and anticipating potential pitfalls for the partnership. This can include, but is not limited to, knowing the legal and ethical demands of the partnerships, analyzing their financial dimensions and assessing the trustworthiness of the other parties.

Principles for Successful Partnerships in Higher Education

There are a number of factors, characteristics and principles for effective university partnerships. The task force offers the following principles for university partnerships:

- Understand that successful partnerships require a substantial investment of the president's time.
- Know why the institution wants to engage in a partnership.
- Involve many stakeholders in deciding whether to pursue a partnership.

- Be certain to consult with and inform all relevant governing boards.
- Ensure the partnership aligns with the institution's mission.
- Understand the partnership's full effect on the institution.
- Understand partner motivations.
- Ensure that the partnership is well planned and adequately resourced.
- Conduct due diligence in crafting every partnership agreement.
- Be alert to a partnership's optics.
- Follow through continually to ensure a partnership is conducted well.
- Establish criteria for measuring results.
- Remain flexible.
- Communicate frequently about the partnership.
- Plan for sustaining the success of the partnership through its lifecycle.
- Have an exit strategy.

Legal Considerations

Legal issues are a key concern for university partnerships, and more complex partnerships will require more legal scrutiny. Legal counsel should be involved early in the process to ensure that the partnership complies with applicable laws and regulations, addresses tax implications and minimizes risk. Other factors, such as approvals from board, system or state agencies, as well as local units of government, must also be considered early in the process.

Policy Considerations

Public college and university leaders have a key role in advocating for policies that facilitate partnerships, and each state has a unique policy environment that can dictate the extent to which the campuses can engage in partnerships, particularly with the private sector. College presidents should work in concert with their legal counsel and government affairs professionals to examine policies in their state and ways to optimize the environment for partnerships. Key issues for consideration include scanning the policy landscape, determining the policies that hinder partnership development and identifying the potential partnerships affected by those policies. In addition, examining ambiguities and conflicts in existing policies and offering policy solutions are important to creating an environment conducive to partnerships. Policy concerns need to be addressed well in advance of entering into a partnership, as the timeframe for addressing policy issues can be long.

Nurturing a Culture That Supports Partnerships

It can be beneficial for college and university leaders to create a partnership culture. For some institutions, this may mean making subtle changes to their existing ways of working, while others may seek to ingrain this culture through integrating partnerships into practices that advance the mission of the university. One way to start a culture of partnerships is to conduct a thorough review of existing university partnerships and start conversations on how to build on the existing base. College and university leaders can also build this culture by creating policies and procedures that facilitate partnership development. In addition, some universities might find it useful to create an office that helps develop, vet and execute partnerships; these offices can also serve as gateways for potential partners. Culture change can also come through hiring staff and faculty with an entrepreneurial orientation and an interest in partnerships.

INTRODUCTION

Today's extraordinary financial, political, demographic and social pressures make the challenge of leading a public university daunting. Because public institutions are asked to do more with fewer resources, a new set of leadership skills is required. To succeed in the years ahead, public college and university leaders will need entrepreneurial creativity to fulfill their visions for the future of their institutions.

Due to increased demands and dwindling state investment, public college and university leaders will rely increasingly on forging partnerships to help them accomplish their institutional goals. Partnerships will become a more essential tool for university leaders to help their institutions adapt and thrive amid economic volatility, political change, demographic shifts and technological developments.

Partnerships can take many different forms and can have a wide array of goals. Community relationships, collaborations between educational institutions, and public-private partnerships (P3s) are a few of the modalities that partnerships can take. Many institutions already have developed partnerships, and a few have honed true expertise. But as universities look for new solutions to increasingly constricted finances and higher expectations from stakeholders, partnerships will play a more important role in university operations, academic programs and research. Looking ahead, university leaders will paint from a broad palette of possibilities to develop partnerships that will advance their institutions.

To understand this evolving landscape, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) convened a task force of university leaders with experience and expertise in partnerships. Through work that included a meeting in Washington, D.C., in June 2017, the task force sought to identify best practices that undergird successful execution of partnerships between public colleges and universities and external stakeholders, and among other educational institutions. The task force sought to acknowledge more fully the current scope of university partnerships; particularly, the task force sought to identify benefits of partnerships, barriers to their success and principles that can guide their development.

The task force's findings, collected in this report, provide guidelines and advice for how institutions might engage optimally in partnerships and capitalize on their benefits while avoiding some of their potential pitfalls.

The report's intended audience starts with the presidents of public colleges and universities and state systems of higher education. The findings here will be particularly valuable for new leaders. We also expect that experienced campus- and system-level leaders will also draw insights from our findings. In addition, this report will be valuable for the widening sphere of administrators at public institutions and systems of higher education who are involved in crafting and executing partnerships, including provosts, vice presidents and their colleagues across campus in such roles as advancement, government relations and program management. Similarly, this report will be useful to help trustees of public universities and members of system-level boards appreciate the nature and particularities of partnerships. Finally, this report will aid faculty and staff who are often at the front lines of meeting a partnership's goals.



This is New Jersey City University's new 77,000 square foot performing arts center and academic building for music, dance and theater. This development will also include 11,800 square feet of retail space and 160 market rate housing units. More information about this public-private partnership can be found on page 27.

TODAY'S IMPERATIVE FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Public universities have engaged in partnerships of one form or another since their earliest days. But the metamorphosis that public higher education is undergoing makes partnerships even more imperative today. State disinvestment is driving universities to invent new business models and tap new revenue streams. Demographic and technological changes also contribute to what is a rapidly changing environment for higher education.

Collaborations with outside entities can help universities navigate this new era. Partnerships create channels that enable universities to leverage higher education's resources to drive economic growth in today's knowledge-based economy. Partnerships can be forged to develop the physical plant, improve online learning and optimize enrollment management. Partnerships can expand the scope of university research and can create opportunities for students to gain practical experience that prepares them for success in the workplace.

As the examples mentioned in this report attest, public universities have already developed a rich portfolio of successful partnerships. For the reasons stated above, this portfolio likely will expand in the years ahead. Partnerships will become a more common tool in helping universities deliver on their missions with fiscal prudence and managerial ingenuity. Universities will engage in more partnerships that expand their research and offer more opportunities for students. Partnerships that serve community needs will also become more common, and university leaders will develop deeper expertise in partnerships as they engage in more of them.

The scope of partnerships also will expand. In addition to an increase of partnerships that focus on the physical plant and its administrative management, we anticipate a greater number of partnerships that focus on teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment. Some institutions are partnering with outside entities to migrate existing academic programs to new formats, such as online learning, and to develop wholly new online programs. The current trend toward more engagement with Online Program Managers (OPMs)—companies that provide turnkey or a la carte support for university online programs—is one manifestation of the expansion of partnerships into the educational mission of the university. Similarly, some institutions are turning to partnerships to manage aspects of enrollment management. The growth of these partnerships shows no signs of abating going forward.

The bottom line is that partnerships will be increasingly important for all aspects of university operations. Embracing partnerships does not mean that public colleges and universities will change or compromise their principles, values or goals. Rather, it means that public colleges and universities will turn to partnerships more regularly as critical tools to help them navigate the changing environment, especially in terms of improving students' opportunities for experiential learning. With that as context, this report will review particular types of university partnerships along with their benefits, risks and principles for successful implementation. These sections, in turn, will inform the heart of the report on best practices pertaining to partnerships. The final three sections will explore legal considerations, policy issues and building an institutional culture that fosters partnership development.



A recent graduate of Metropolitan State University of Denver participates in a partnership program with York Space Systems. More information about this partnership can be found on page 17.

TYPICAL TYPES OF UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Universities can engage in a broad array of partnerships. Some partnerships are more transactional, while others are based on collaborative relationships. The realm of partnerships in which a university might engage can be thought of as a continuum from least complex, such as community partnerships and relationships with other universities, to more high-risk, high-profile relationships, such as public-private partnerships (P3s).

While this report mentions many different types of partnerships, it is not intended as a how-to guide for specific strategies for framing and executing partnerships. Nor does it refer to every potential type of partnership in which a university might engage. We do not mean to imply that one size fits all when it comes to university partnerships. Rather, just the opposite is true: Development and execution of successful partnerships require that each institution design unique relationships that reflect and address the institution's own culture and the political landscape in which it exists. Our purpose here is to raise some fundamental and critically important principles that college leaders need to weigh as they engage their institutions in partnerships.

Community relationships. Many public colleges and universities are deeply involved in partnerships with community groups. Often, community-based partnerships have goals other than generating revenues or reducing costs. Community-based partnerships help public colleges and universities deliver on their core mission of serving students and residents in their regions. They might be designed to help more local students start a college career and graduate. They might be designed to improve town-gown relationships, target better health outcomes, accelerate economic progress or advance social justice. Community-based partnerships might include work to apply university expertise in helping local governments deliver on their goals under constrained economic conditions. Community partnerships can provide the means through which universities share knowledge they have generated in ways that are directly applicable in practice.

For the university, one direct benefit of participating in community partnerships is that of contributing directly to the fabric of life in its community. Apart from their specific purpose(s), community-based partnerships provide a channel for public institutions to deliver on their promise to be what AASCU calls "stewards of place," and to serve as cultural, financial and intellectual anchors of life in their regions. The AASCU publication *Operationalizing Stewards of Place: Implementing Regional Engagement and Economic Development Strategies* (2015) offers particulars in this regard. For the community, benefits of partnerships with universities can accrue through the sharing of university resources, expertise and "people power." Community partnerships often provide substantial opportunities for students to learn and to be of

Examples of University Partnerships

University of Wisconsin Green Bay—*Phuture Phoenix Program*

A coordinated effort to inspire academic success and alert K-12 students to educational opportunities available to them, Phuture Phoenix provides an opportunity for students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds to learn more—through tutoring, mentoring and campus visits—about how post-secondary education is important, attainable and available. The program has led to partnerships with two dozen elementary schools, five middle schools and five high schools in the northeast Wisconsin region. Today over 175 University of Wisconsin Green Bay students participate in the tutoring and mentoring program, and two annual campus visits reach over 1,400 students every year. The university also has a scholarship available for program participants. [For more information, contact the Office of the Director, Phuture Phoenix.]

service. Faculty who engage in community partnerships often find they enrich pedagogy and curricula, offer opportunities for scholarship and provide direct opportunities for mentoring.

University-community partnerships have many different points of contact, including the university itself; a college, department or program; individual faculty members; and student organizations. Many university-community partnerships focus on P-12 education, including efforts to improve local schools and engage more students in pathways to college. Public colleges and universities have found ample opportunities to engage in partnerships that physically link a campus with communities, perhaps with new roads, retail projects or infrastructure to support public transportation. Sometimes, university-community partnerships are designed to share university expertise to help local governments accomplish goals that might otherwise be elusive. Often, university-community partnerships have a research or economic development focus, perhaps around public health disparities, equity and technology transfer.

Partnerships with other educational institutions. Another category of partnerships in which public institutions regularly engage can be framed as partnerships with other educational institutions. Articulation agreements with community or technical colleges are one example, as are joint academic programming between universities. Partnerships with P-12 schools—perhaps to bring college courses to high schools or to help P-12 students develop aspirations that include higher learning—are yet another dimension of such partnerships. Beyond our borders, public colleges and universities also have established partnerships and exchange agreements with institutions of higher education in countries around the world.

Increasingly, universities are forming or joining consortia to help them achieve economies of scale in such areas as purchasing and information technology (IT) and to share courses and programs. Some institutions, for example, have experimented with partnerships with neighboring campuses to share back-office administrative services. Fundamentally, of course, statewide university systems provide countless opportunities for institutions to share resources, collaborate on programs and otherwise partner to share assets. Recent years have seen more aggressive efforts to realize administrative economies through statewide systems. Given ongoing fiscal constraints and demographic shifts, we can expect more work at system levels to encourage institutions to do more to partner in sharing administrative functions such as human relations, IT and purchasing.



Examples of University Partnerships

Western Washington University—*Western Global Pathways*

Western Washington University (WWU) partnered with Study Group, a global leader in international student recruitment and on-campus pathway student success programs, to increase international student enrollment. The partnership seeks to help WWU advance an important element of one of its longstanding goals of internationalization—increased enrollment of international students. Since 2012, international student enrollment has averaged 1 percent of the total student enrollment. The initiative is driven by the need to diversify Western's student body, as well as the need to cultivate global citizenship in its resident students through them learning a diversity of human values and cultures and experiencing an intercultural living and learning environment. [For more information, contact the Office of the Provost, Western Washington University.]

Public-private partnerships (P3s). Many university partnerships take the form of P3s. A typical P3 might involve a university leasing a plot of land to a developer who finances, constructs and manages a building or buildings on the property (see Figure 1). Variations might involve funding through tax-exempt bonds, or joint ownership in a project for which the university might get a percentage of equity. Alternatively, universities might partner with an online program management firm to create or scale online programming.

P3s are collaborations between the public and private sectors that use the assets and expertise of both parties through the optimal allocation of resources, risks and rewards. They are distinguished from more contractual university relationships with vendors by their cooperative nature. In some states, legislation enables and supports P3s.

There are many different ways to structure P3s, and there are numerous ways to implement these partnerships. For example, the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF), a national organization of top business and university leaders, has developed a Strategic Implementation Process to guide academic partnerships with the private sector (see Figure 2). Its approach starts with understanding the needs of the marketplace and ends with curricular change leading to talent

Figure 1. Select Types of Public-Private Partnerships in Higher Education

SELECT TYPES OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

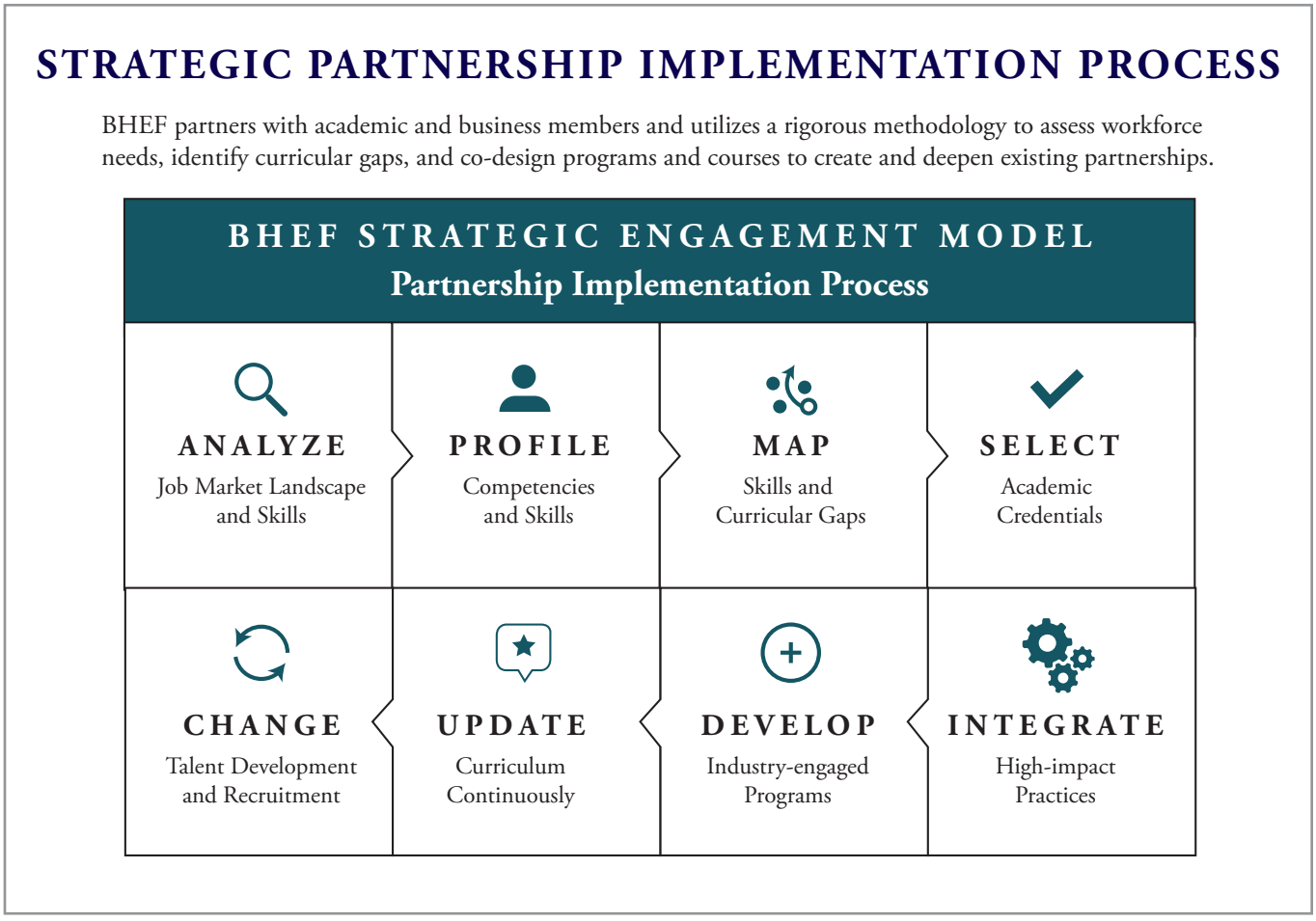
Ground lease campus land to developer	*Ground lease to developer with facility master lease*	*Special purpose 501(c)(3)-owned project with private developer*	*Joint venture*
• Developer receives long-term land lease: 30-99 years • Developer handles financing, construction and operations • Improvements owned by developer until end of land lease, then returned to university	• Often used with housing • Ground lease plus university rental or guarantee of occupancy to minimize developer risk and lower cost of project financing	• University or affiliate owns land and signs long-term ground lease with special purpose 501(c)(3) created by developer • 501(c)(3) issues tax exempt debt to finance design, construction • 501(c)(3)-paid fee to perform basic corporate services • 501(c)(3) will contract with others for management services • Title to building transfers to university at end of lease	• Separate for-profit joint venture entity established • University and private partner each contributes cash, land or other value in return for equity in a joint venture • Sharing of governance and profits and losses
Select factors to consider:			
• Competitive solicitation process • Appropriate length of lease • Appropriate amount of rent • Type of rent • Oversight of design/ construction • Utilities	• Creates financial risk for university • Possibility for more return to university • State statutes regarding equity/guarantees • Mandatory to live on campus?	• Lack of control unless university is manager • Who sets charges/rates? • Need adequate provisions for debt services and maintenance reserves	• Opportunity for new revenue source • University at risk for losses • Choice of partner is critical • Appropriate entity to hold risk • State law restrictions • Amount of control over joint venture decision making

Source: University of Central Florida

development and recruitment. However, this process may not always be linear. BHEF has honed expertise on these collaborations through the launch of 35 business-higher education partnerships, producing over 50 new academic programs. Examples include a collaboration between State Farm and Illinois State University to co-create the state's first major in cybersecurity and a partnership between Northrop Grumman and the University of Maryland to create the nation's first cybersecurity honors program.

Recent years have seen an uptick in forms of P3s that extend the model in a multitude of ways. In relationships that go far beyond the typical "buyer-vendor" paradigm, for example, many institutions have used P3s to privatize their bookstores, dining facilities, landscaping and building maintenance services. Beyond that, institutions have crafted partnerships to help in enrollment management, to develop and scale online learning programs, to provide tools for data analytics and to assist with assessment and testing, among other examples. Partnerships also often include a focus on academics and research, including opportunities for faculty and students to conduct research and opportunities for students to engage in meaningful internships.

Figure 2. Business-Higher Education Forum's (BHEF) Strategic Partnerships Implementation Process



Source: Business-Higher Education Forum

BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIPS

Many of the benefits of university partnerships with other entities are self-evident. P3s, for example, provide resources—financial and otherwise—that can help an institution speed the completion of infrastructure projects while mitigating associated costs and risks. P3s can speed the development of new student housing, for example, while transferring much of the financial and operating risks to a private developer. P3s can help an institution monetize and thus access value from existing assets. Engaging in P3s can not only expedite major project development—in some cases, it may actually reduce the costs of capital projects. P3s can lessen the financial risk that a university can incur in a major capital project, including preserving a university's debt capacity, and can provide access to favorable credit terms. Partnerships can sometimes create relationships with new sources of philanthropic support.

Partnerships can also help universities outsource activities that are not central to their mission, freeing resources that can be applied to delivery of essential services at the core of a university's mission. Through P3s, for example, public universities can leverage outside expertise in areas such as building construction and finance that are outside the core institutional mission. Partners in such ventures bring expertise that the university would be unlikely to have on its own. P3s can also help universities build, run and maintain facilities with greater efficiency and perhaps lower costs than the university might be able to accomplish on its own.

There are also rich opportunities for research and learning in university partnerships. Faculty engaged in partnerships often find that they open doors to research opportunities and the creation of new knowledge. Many university partnerships provide ample opportunities for students to learn new concepts, obtain practical experience and develop contacts that can lead to future employment. Partnerships can also provide a rich forum for development of entrepreneurial ideas by students and faculty.

Partnerships also provide channels through which public universities can deliver on their missions as stewards of place. Whether the focus is on P-12 education, alliances with community colleges, local or regional economic development, urban renewal, or any number of other community-oriented opportunities, partnerships can help public universities serve their regions in concrete ways that reap tangible results.



Food donations are sorted and prepared for distribution by Weber State University students at the local food bank in northern Utah for a project affiliated with the Center for Community-Engaged Learning. More information about this partnership can be found on page 20.

RISKS OF PARTNERSHIPS

Like any enterprise that has the potential for high rewards, partnerships often come with innate risks. There are many ways a partnership can fail. Potential risks in partnerships include loss of control over financial arrangements and program quality, the need to make a long-term commitment (e.g., 99-year land leases), and possible over-commitment by the university in financial obligations. Partners can change during the course of a collaboration, and relationships between partners can sour. Partnerships have run into trouble when their structures were not set up properly.

Any list of risks of partnerships cannot be exhaustive because many risks are specific to particular partnerships. Regardless, basic cautions are always prudent. Risk analysis and scenario planning must be part of the planning process. A plan for risk mitigation should be included in any partnership agreement; stakeholders need to understand risks well in advance of any time that they may manifest themselves. Consequently, investment of time in planning a partnership as well as performing due diligence in structuring it and anticipating both its opportunities and potential pitfalls are essential. Lastly, public college and university leaders must invest substantial time in maintaining a partnership, from its inception to its expiration.

Before engaging in a partnership, the president should seek internal advice, but also seek legal and financial counsel from experts outside the institution who can provide objective guidance that can help the partnership avoid possible pitfalls. If that due diligence comes back with red flags, the president needs to be prepared to walk away. Some basic questions on risks include the following:

- Does the partnership cross legal or ethical lines?
- Does the partnership adhere to state or system rules and regulations?
- Do the finances work? Have university leaders and counsel fully vetted the financial dimensions of the project, including any downstream ramifications?
- Are the partners trustworthy? Has trust been established?

Photograph by August Jennewein/courtesy University of Missouri-St. Louis



Examples of University Partnerships

University of Missouri-St. Louis—*Partnership with Express Scripts*

In 2005, Express Scripts, a pharmacy benefit management company, decided to move its headquarters to the edge of the University of Missouri-St. Louis's (UMSL) campus. That move sparked a collaboration that has since seen the construction of new buildings and included research opportunities for UMSL faculty, internships for students, joint information technology projects, mentoring opportunities at local schools, an M.B.A. program, employee professional development courses for Express Scripts employees staffed by UMSL faculty, and significant corporate financial support for the university, among many other benefits. [For more information, contact Office of the President, University of Missouri-St. Louis.]

PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

As public colleges and universities broaden their experience and expertise in developing and executing partnerships, they are also developing a body of knowledge about factors, characteristics and principles that help create effective partnerships—and, conversely, factors that might cause partnerships to go astray. In that regard, the task force offers the following considerations.

Successful partnerships require a substantial investment of the president's time. One overarching principle is that the most important university partnerships require a president's personal participation. A president is often the single person on campus who is best positioned to identify opportunities for significant, potentially transformative partnerships. The university leader also plays an essential role in ensuring that such partnerships are vetted fully and executed well.

The success of key institutional partnerships often pivots on the continued commitment by the institution's leader. There are no shortcuts for effective engagement of the campus or system leader. Presidents who are serious about wanting to build and leverage their institution's capacity for partnerships must be prepared to commit significant blocks of time to partnership development, planning and execution.

That said, the president also needs a trusted deputy—a high-ranking colleague with a track record for leading large-scale, high-profile projects—who can lead and manage the day-to-day activities of the partnership and keep the president informed. Some key questions on time management of partnerships include the following:

- How much of the president's time will a university partnership require?
- Has the president committed to devoting necessary time to the project?
- Does the president have a trusted colleague who can manage operational implementation of the project, keep the effort on track and report back to the president and campus stakeholders regularly?



Examples of University Partnerships

University of Central Missouri—*The Missouri Innovation Campus*

The Missouri Innovation Campus (MIC) is a collaborative effort between business partners, Lee's Summit R-7 School District, Metropolitan Community College and the University of Central Missouri. This K-16 accelerated pathway program allows high school students in their junior year to begin taking required high school classes, but also college credit courses that will allow them to graduate from the Metropolitan Community College with an associate degree soon after high school graduation. Two years after finishing high school, the students are eligible to earn a Bachelor's of Science degree from the University of Central Missouri. Curriculum is built with workforce competencies defined by business partners. Three-year paid internships help produce shared outcomes for students while reducing their college debt load. The MIC substantially reduces time to degree completion at a lower cost and links degrees to opportunities in the workforce through internships and partnerships with the business community. [For more information: contact the Office of the President, University of Central Missouri.]

Know why the institution wants to engage in a partnership. It is altogether too easy for compelling architectural renderings of a new dormitory or dining facility to distract a president's attention from deep questions that a college leader must ask around any partnership. Fundamentally, the leader must know the full scope of what the parameters of the project are, what the institution stands to gain from the partnership, what the short-term and long-term risks are and how well the project fits with the institution's strategic goals. Answering those questions thoroughly requires exhaustive analysis by the president, and the ability to look beyond the potential promise of a "shiny new object" to consider all of its ramifications.

Institutional leaders regularly are presented with all kinds of tempting offers that they need to be able to prioritize. That can certainly be true when it comes to partnerships. Sometimes proposed partnerships may look alluring, but may in fact be a poor fit for the university. Sometimes, too, an enticing proposed partnership may in fact be a solution in search of a problem rather than the other way around. University leaders need to be discerning about whether a proposed partnership is right for the institution. One rule of thumb is to focus first on a given challenge, not on the potential returns or benefits that a partnership may offer. True leadership demands that college presidents understand a given challenge in depth, and then decide whether a partnership is the right solution. In some cases, true leadership may require that a university leader have the courage not to pursue a partnership—even though it may look attractive on its face—when circumstances and analysis suggest that a university's resources (e.g., staff time, money, political capital, etc.) might be better spent elsewhere. To help guide such decisions, the university may want to develop a set of principles or guidelines that define what kinds of partnerships it deems acceptable and why.

It is up to the president to clarify and define the strategic benefits that a partnership poses for a university, as well as whether there is a real need for the partnership. For example, a given opportunity to serve the community may seem wonderful to the university, but may not be of interest in the community. It is also up to the president to make sure partnerships are structured to extract optimal strategic benefits. Therefore, it is important to be realistic about how the university can best contribute to the partnership.

In short, the university leader must be able to answer fundamental questions:

- Does this particular partnership make strategic sense? Does it fit with the institution's mission?
- Is a partnership appropriate for this given project? Should the institution engage in this partnership and why?
- What are the potential benefits? What are the potential risks?
- How might this partnership impact the university and stakeholders on and off campus?
- What are the "optics" around a partnership—how might it be perceived (or perhaps misinterpreted) by university stakeholders? Do those optics need to be managed, and, if so, how? Does the university leader have all the information he or she needs to judge the optics of a given partnership?
- What would happen if we did not pursue this partnership? Are there compelling reasons not to engage in a partnership opportunity?

Involve many stakeholders in deciding whether to pursue a partnership. While a certain degree of entrepreneurship is necessary for a successful presidency today, presidents must resist any temptation to forge partnerships on their own. Too much is at stake in terms of the institution's reputation and resources—as well as the president's reputation. A hallmark of successful university partnerships is that they are collaborative efforts. Presidents should seek counsel about a potential partnership from a variety of stakeholders in advance. That kind of consultation can help a president identify potential pitfalls, see opportunities that may not have been obvious before, and even save a university leader from getting into a problematic situation.

Part of the due diligence that is critical to any partnership, therefore, is that institutional leaders actively solicit input about a potential partnership from all key university stakeholders inside and outside the institution. Presidents need to decide on the appropriate stakeholders. By their nature, partnerships often demand that universities work across silos, disciplines, divisions and departments; doing so may require campus stakeholders to intentionally step outside traditional work channels and hierarchies and go beyond typical comfort zones. Input from the university's counsel,

Examples of University Partnerships

California State University Channel Islands— *Santa Rosa Island Research Station*



Among the many partnerships essential in its creation, California State University Channel Islands (CI) entered into an agreement with the National Park Service to open the untapped resources of Santa Rosa Island, one of the Channel Islands off the coast of California, and sometimes referred to as the Galapagos of North America. Through this partnership, the jewel that is Santa Rosa Island is overseen for research purposes and exploration of its unique environments—biological, botanical, coastal, cultural, archeological, among them—through the Santa Rosa Island Research Station (SRIRS) of CI. Faculty and students are given access to precious resources while advancing the National Park Service's goal of preserving the island's integrity in a controlled, sustainable way. In addition, CI's research station draws scholars, researchers, and students from across the country with international interest as well. [For more information: contact Office of the President, California State University Channel Islands.]

Examples of University Partnerships

State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill— *Institute for Rural Vitality*

Partnering with federal, state, regional and local entities, as well as with the State University of New York College (SUNY) system, SUNY Cobleskill created the Institute for Rural Vitality. Through five centers—including the Center for Farm and Food Entrepreneurship, the Center for Business Development, the Center for Community Advancement, the Center for Rural Legal and Policy Services, and the Center for Arts and Culture—the institute addresses the region's most pressing issues in work designed to develop and enact sustainable solutions. Across the institute's work, students and faculty are at the center of the community partnerships and coalitions, creating boundless new immersive learning opportunities both on and off campus. [For more information, contact the Office of the President, SUNY Cobleskill.]

Examples of University Partnerships

University of Southern Mississippi—*Advanced Economic Development Leadership Program*

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) is partnering with three other major universities on a unique initiative designed to benefit mid-level to senior-level economic development practitioners. USM joined forces with The University of Alabama, Clemson University, and Texas Christian University to provide the Advanced Economic Development Leadership Program, an advanced training course that is the first of its kind in its industry. The curriculum is designed collaboratively by all four universities. [For more information, contact the Office of the Director, The University of Alabama Economic Development Academy.]

and perhaps from outside counsel with specific expertise in partnerships, is essential. It is also vital that the president's financial staff be on board—and given ample opportunity to fully analyze the project based on their expertise and past experience. The president will also want to get the perspective of executive staff in roles such as government relations, community relations, public relations and advancement. In part because many partnerships today include an academic component, many presidents seek the provost's or deans' insights about potential partnerships.

In addition, though, the president should make a point of also seeking input beyond the confines of his or her cabinet or senior leaders. Given that partnerships can be controversial for any number of reasons, not the least of which is that they are "new," or that they might be perceived as distractions from the university mission or a poor use of its resources, knowing in advance what possible reservations university stakeholders might have about a given partnership is a necessary part of the strategy for developing partnerships. Engaging in conversations in advance with many different campus stakeholders is therefore essential. Further, it certainly behooves a president to take the pulse of faculty leadership around the possibilities of partnerships in advance. Apart from the value of having faculty leaders on board in advance, faculty who have engaged in partnerships themselves may have relevant advice to offer. Presidents should be open to including other voices, as well, including those of staff who might be expected to work on a given partnership. Student perspectives can often be valuable in helping university leaders gauge the impact—and potential pitfalls—of given partnerships.

Developing relationships and building trust with local elected officials, neighborhood associations and nonprofit organizations remain essential to the success of many university partnerships. For many of these initiatives—particularly those involving land development—the community can play an outsized role in determining its success. Therefore, it is incumbent upon university presidents and other key campus leaders not to start developing relationships with community members at the launch of a partnership proposal, but rather throughout their time at the university.

In some cases, it may be valuable to consult with other institutions that may have engaged in partnerships that have parallels with one that campus leaders might be considering—perhaps with the same funder, for example. Peers at other institutions may be another source of relevant advice.

- Before signing a partnership agreement, have all the relevant stakeholders been consulted about the project?
- Have stakeholders been provided with an ample amount of information about the partnership—enough for them to fully understand the ramifications of the project and perhaps tell where some potential pitfalls might lie?
- Have other institutions and university leaders who have experience with similar projects been consulted? Has their advice been taken seriously?

Be certain to consult with and inform all relevant governing boards. For any partnership, a critical step is to engage in discussion about the relationship with the institution's governing board and any other relevant governing bodies, such as a university foundation board or a state governing body. Some partnerships might also require

consultation with state political leaders. In some cases, too, getting the input of local politicians and civic leaders might be imperative. Whatever the board structure and regardless of how university officials have identified other critical stakeholders, it is up to the president to make sure these key constituencies are brought in early to the planning process for any partnership. This vital step must not be overlooked.

Consultations with boards are critical for several reasons. Board members from the business community may have directly relevant experience and can often offer invaluable perspectives on aspects of a partnership that might not be as familiar to institutional staff, including the president, who may not have as much direct experience shaping and executing the business relationships that are part and parcel of many—if not most—partnerships. Similarly, board members may have expertise and experience that enables them to identify legal risks that less experienced staff may not readily see. (See separate section on legal considerations on page 27.) Just as important, board members can often identify potential political pitfalls that a partnership might trigger. Getting constructive suggestions or even constructive criticism from the governing board in advance is far preferable to hearing criticisms from board members after a partnerships has run awry due to factors that board members could have helped to avoid.

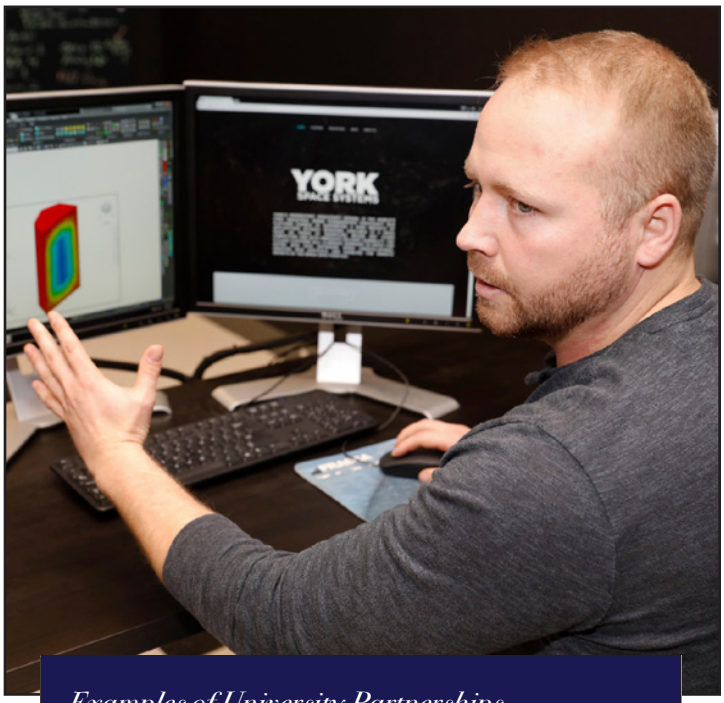
In discussions about partnerships with governing boards, it is imperative that the president and his or her staff be absolutely candid and forthcoming with details. Presidents and institutions need the support of their governing board for endeavors such as partnerships, and such support is built out of trust and candor. Presidents in particular need to know that their governing board supports a partnership, and that the board will back the president if necessary should the partnership hit turbulence. An institution and its leaders cannot afford to have a governing board that is caught unaware of a partnership or that is surprised by missteps in a partnership that could have been avoided had the board been consulted more fully. There have been cases where presidents who ignored or forgot this principle got into hot water—or worse. A few questions to ask include the following:

- As a critical step in planning a partnership, have all members of the institution's governing board been fully consulted?
- Have institutional leaders been candid and forthcoming with details about the planned partnership?
- Before the partnership is a done deal, have institutional leaders given the governing board an adequate chance to review the partnership's structure and potential impact and to offer feedback?
- Have institutional leaders fully addressed any board reservations about the partnership?
- Do institutional leaders feel they would have the board's support should something in the partnership go wrong?
- If necessary, have state or local political leaders been engaged in understanding the plans for the partnerships? Have any reservations been fully considered, such as the potential impact of the institution's partnership on local businesses?

Ensure that the partnership aligns with the institution's mission. Part of the nature of partnerships is that they can engage an institution in work around new ideas, in collaborations that require new ways of thinking, or in projects it otherwise might not have participated. Particularly when considering partnerships that might take an institution outside its comfort zone, it is up to the university leader to assess how well the purpose of the partnership aligns with the institution's core mission, and how well it fits with the institution's culture.

There may be compelling reasons to leverage a partnership to push an institution to work outside its traditional boundaries. A case in point might be engaging with a partner to develop a new academic program, as opposed to the more traditional approach of developing academic programs in house. P3s can be an effective means to enhance an institution's infrastructure. Partnerships that invite an institution to take a different tack to meeting its challenges can provide productive channels for an evolving environment and landscape. Partnerships that require an institution to work creatively often can be productive and stimulating. But sometimes partnerships that offer a great deal of promise do not align well with an institution's mission and culture, or may push an institution too far and too fast into unfamiliar terrain. It is the president's responsibility to assess that alignment.

A related question is whether the partnership will enable the institution to uphold its quality standards. For example, it is important to confirm in advance that an academic program developed by outside partners will meet or exceed



Examples of University Partnerships

Metropolitan State University of Denver—*Partnership with York Space Systems*

Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU) partnered with York Space Systems, an aerospace company, to establish a new manufacturing facility and Mission Operations Center on the MSU campus. Under the agreement, an innovative York Space Systems factory is located in MSU's new Aerospace and Engineering Sciences building, part of MSU's Advanced Manufacturing Sciences Institute. The facility will house a Mission Operations Center that will operate spacecraft in real-time, and includes production capacity for up to 200 satellites per year. Through the partnership, MSU students of the Aviation and Aerospace Science Department can collaborate on ongoing development projects and have access to opportunities for internships, part-time employment and work/study programs. Additionally, seniors will be able to design culminating projects that can help them launch aerospace careers and develop new companies of their own. [For more information, contact the Office of the President, MSU.]

Examples of University Partnerships

Eastern Kentucky University—*Public-Private Partnership for Residence Halls*

Starting in the spring of 2016, Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) partnered with Grand Campus, LLC and Municipal Acquisitions in its first-ever public-private partnership. This partnership involves construction of two new residence halls and restructuring of a lease on an apartment complex adjacent to campus, through which the university became the owner of record of that property and the complex became part of the university's housing. The partnership helped EKU address its aging infrastructure in the face of declining state budgets, a challenge that many other universities also find daunting. EKU's administration leveraged the partnership as part of an overall revitalization of its campus. [For more information, contact the Office of the President, EKU.]



the institution's expectations for the quality of programs developed internally. Another example might be a partnership designed to recruit nontraditional or international students, where there need to be protocols to ensure that the students recruited by partners meet the institution's basic standards. Partners may be less concerned with institutional standards than with meeting the partnership's requirements, and it may become necessary for the institution to insist those standards be upheld.

Presidents and their colleagues must assess these questions in earnest prior to entering into any partnership. If concerns arise about whether the nature of a partnership aligns with an institution's mission, such questions should not be glossed over.

These core questions might serve as guidance:

- Does the partnership support student learning and success?
- Will the partnership help the institution advance teaching, learning and scholarship?
- Will the partnership help the university be a good neighbor?
- Will the partnership challenge or undermine institutional traditions?
- Will the partnership help advance institutional priorities?

Understand the partnership's full effect on the institution. Partnerships require a certain commitment of university assets. Presidents must certainly have a detailed understanding of the full financial commitment that a partnership might entail. At the same time, the president must also assess what the partnership will costs in terms of staff time and other institutional assets, such as physical space. The president should assess the full cost of a partnership in the context of all the institutional resources it will require.

Part of the exercise of understanding a potential partnership has to be acknowledging the culture and norms by which that partner works. Differences can arise, for example, when partners from the private sector want to move faster than a university's traditions and structures might typically allow (see discussion below). As part of ensuring the success of a partnership, the president should assess and consciously decide about factors such as the desired speed with which a partnership will unfold—and know in advance how that might affect the university. For example, if the decision is made to act at the speed of business rather than according

Examples of University Partnerships

University of Michigan-Dearborn—*New Detroit, Inc.*

Starting in 2002, the University of Michigan-Dearborn became a highly active partner in New Detroit, Inc., a coalition of businesses, nonprofit organizations and foundations formed in 1967 to improve race relations and close the gap of racial disparities in Detroit. Some of the value the university provides the partnership includes research, engagement in the partnership's strategic planning, support for the partnership's advocacy agenda and access to engaged students at the university. Among other activities, the university helped convene an important "conversation on race for a new generation" that was described by one historian as the "most open and honest set of conversations on race" he had encountered. Benefits for the university include substantially greater organizational competence in support of inclusiveness, credibility and trust with other organizations, and an expanded reputation for active participation in a valuable and highly visible local partnership. [For more information, contact the Office of the President & the CEO of New Detroit, Inc.]



For many years the University of Michigan-Dearborn and New Detroit have partnered to offer the Youth Leadership Summit on Race. The program, a forum for high school students to engage in important dialogue about race, utilizes college students as both near-peer discussion facilitators and panel speakers.

to a university's typically slower processes, provisions will be needed to accommodate that way of working in the context of the university's culture. Different policies for program approval may be necessary. Sometimes, for example, approval processes can be streamlined or partnerships can be executed as pilot programs. The university leader may need to actively support and reward changes in university culture that permit faster decision making and action in support of partnerships. Guiding questions to ask include the following:

- What is the full extent of the university's financial commitment to the partnership? How long will that commitment be? Have university officials planned for contingencies should that commitment exceed assumptions?
- How much staff time will the partnership require? How might allocation of staff time to the partnership affect the university's ability to meet other priorities?
- What other institutional assets, such as physical space, might the partnership require? What are the short- and long-term implications of that commitment?
- What opportunity costs might be associated with the partnership? How might the commitment of resources to the partnership affect or even preclude the university from accomplishing other goals?
- What might be some unintended effects of the partnership? For example, if a partnership includes business incubation, could it create competition for some of the university's stakeholders or funders? How might the university's stakeholders perceive the new partnership?
- How will the partnership balance institutional priorities with community and regional priorities?
- Assuming that the private entity in a partnership makes a profit, how will that affect the way state legislators perceive the relationship? Can university officials make the case that the university will receive more in benefits than it pays out in costs?
- If the partnership generates new revenue, how will those funds be used?
- How will the institution interest campus stakeholders in new opportunities that a partnership might produce?

Understand partner motivations. University leaders who engage in partnerships should have a rich, innate understanding of what their institution stands to gain from such a relationship. The success of a partnership also depends on that leader's developing a similarly deep understanding of what motivates a university's partner to participate in such a relationship. Reaching the requisite level of understanding requires an investment of the president's time and energy in getting to know potential partners. It is imperative to understand partner motivations thoroughly.

In these days of limited resources, most partnerships will be designed with a "win-win" dimension. Having a deep and genuine understanding of the partner's perception of what a win constitutes is just as important as understanding what a win means for the institution. Trust and honesty on both parts are imperative—both the partner and the university need to be clear and upfront about what each is seeking from the relationship.

If there is a disconnect, presidents should assess whether the respective goals of the university and the partner can be brought into alignment, whether disparities are acceptable, or perhaps whether the partnership is worth pursuing. The time to ask those questions is well before any partnership agreement is drafted, let alone signed. If the partner cannot reach a certain level of candor and agreement prior to crafting a specific letter of agreement, or if the president cannot trust a partner's motivations, it may not be the right opportunity. Key questions include the following:

- What does the partner bring to the table?
- What does the partner hope to gain from the partnership?
- Are those interests in alignment with the university's interests?
- Where is the win-win for both partners?

Ensure that the partnership is well planned and adequately resourced. A commitment to undertake a partnership is not to be taken lightly. Designing the partnership requires abundant, detailed planning and adequate allocation of human and financial resources. An institution that overcommits in pursuing a partnership when its resources are too thin may be setting itself up for failure, to say nothing of also spoiling future opportunities to collaborate with entities that may fear the university cannot be trusted to partner effectively. Partners other than universities may provide the bulk of funding for a partnership, but universities need to be prepared to contribute financial resources of their own. Engaging in a partnership is also likely to consume significant time on the part of key university staff, from the president on down. This process should not be rushed. Plan to invest that requisite time, and remember that some of the best partnerships are ones that take a long time to come into fruition.

Examples of University Partnerships

Weber State University (Utah)—*Center for Community-Engaged Learning*

The Center for Community-Engaged Learning (CCEL) at Weber State University is a strategic partnership between academic affairs and student affairs that provides both curricular and co-curricular community engagement opportunities for campus constituents in partnership with local community organizations. The center's central mission is to engage students, faculty and staff members in service, democratic engagement and community research to promote civic participation, build community capacity and enhance the educational process. Students, faculty, staff, alumni and community partners come to the CCEL to create connections and opportunities to give and grow through learning and experience and to build a community that thrives. The Weber State model of cooperation between academic affairs and student affairs around community-engaged learning has been replicated at other universities. [For more information, contact the Office of the Provost, Weber State University.]

Weber State University students pose in front of a mural they painted for a nonprofit partner during an alternative spring break trip. This project is affiliated with the Center for Community-Engaged Learning at Weber State University.





Examples of University Partnerships

North Carolina A&T State University and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro—*Gateway University Research Park*

North Carolina A&T State University and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro have engaged in a partnership since 2003 that is today known as the Gateway University Research Park. The collaborative research park offers partnering companies advanced facilities and opportunities to work with world-class faculty. The collaboration consists of two 75-acre campuses, with tenants including the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservative Service, technology and business development companies, and high-tech startup businesses. The research park plans to expand in 2018 to accommodate more tenants. [For more information, contact the Office of the President, North Carolina A&T State University]

Think, too, about the long-term needs of the partnership. Executing a partnership requires ongoing planning and supervision. Sustaining the partnership over time requires a consistent investment of time, money, supervision and planning. An institution that plans to engage in a partnership must be ready to make those kinds of commitments over time.

Perhaps because partnerships often have a transactional nature, university leaders may be tempted to think about them in the same way they would think about purchasing vendor services. Partnerships, however, warrant a different kind of scrutiny and supervision. Especially in cases where large capital projects are involved and in examples of high-profile partnerships between the university and community entities, the president must treat those relationships in much the same way he or she would treat any major university strategic initiative or high-profile supporter. Assuming a president invests a certain level of personal engagement and oversight in such initiatives, that same level of participation is often essential to the success of a partnership.

When it comes to structuring partnerships as a component of university work, it might be necessary to think creatively. Individuals who bring a partnership to campus might not be best suited to execute it once it has been developed.

- Where, within the university structure, should a partnership "live?" Are there individuals, departments or offices that by dint of personalities, culture, or history seem better suited than others to conduct and supervise partnerships?
- Are there pockets in the institution where a partnership would likely receive the care and feeding it requires? Conversely, are there pockets on campus where partnerships would not be treated as a priority?

Conduct due diligence in crafting every partnership agreement. Agreements with partners should never be treated as pro forma documents. Considerable due diligence must go into crafting every partnership agreement. Sound financial and legal advice is essential. This crucial step must never be taken lightly or perfunctorily and must be supported with adequate human and financial resources.

Crafting a partnership agreement that is right for the university requires considerable research into all the ramifications of the given project, with input from as many different stakeholders, inside the institution and outside, as might be needed. Ample time must be allocated to identify and address all relevant questions and to vet in advance every potential consideration that can be anticipated that might affect the success of the partnership. The financial parameters and expectations should be adequately vetted in advance and clearly defined in the partnership agreement. The legal ramifications of a partnership should be explored in depth and relevant considerations spelled out clearly. There can be no shortcuts in this process. Presidents need to be ready to defend spending resources on due diligence even when institutional budgets are tight.

The process of crafting the partnership agreement is also the time and place to define what an institution will and will not do vis-à-vis the partnership and what the partner can and cannot do. Careful thought needs to be paid to both parts of that equation. For example, in partnerships that affect academic programs, a university needs to make a point of saying that it retains full control over such programs—assuming that is the desired goal. Provisions for ownership of intellectual property that may result from partnerships should be stated from the onset. Partnerships in which partners may have direct contact with students need to be explicit about the parameters of that contact.

The structure of a partnership warrants particular attention. It might be tempting, for example, to organize a partnership through a university foundation, but might that approach cede too much control to a party other than the university itself? (This caution would be true only if the university itself is statutorily allowed to enter into these agreements. Not all states allow that. Accreditation issues could also arise from the appearance of another entity's having too much control. In some cases, working through a research or development foundation might be the only path to a desired partnership.) As another approach, might creating a separate entity for the partnership be a way to retain control but shift some of the risk of a partnership away from the university per se? Getting expert advice on the legal structure of a partnership remains paramount.

Designing partnerships provides an opportunity for the university to clarify its own vision for a given project long before any partner becomes engaged. It is also an opportunity for different stakeholders at the institution to get on the same page about that vision.

- Have institutional leaders and outside counsel fully vetted the partnership, including its financial dimensions and potential political impact?



Examples of University Partnerships

University of Central Florida—*America's Partnership University*

Recognizing that it could achieve more through partnerships than it could on its own, the University of Central Florida (UCF) made partnering one its five central goals and branded itself as "America's Partnership University." UCF's commitment to partnerships has yielded a wide variety of collaborations in central Florida: with other universities; the K-12 community; businesses; and federal, state and local units of government. This has resulted in significant job growth and boosted Florida's economy. As just one example, UCF partnered with another institution (Florida International University), firms in the private sector, foundations and philanthropists, local hospitals, and offices in state and local governments to create the UCF College of Medicine and a surrounding Medical City, which was projected to create up to 30,000 jobs and $7.6 billion in annual economic impact by the end of 2017. [For more information, contact the Office of the President, UCF.]

- Does the partnership agreement clearly delineate the responsibilities of the respective partners?
- As framed in the agreement, does the partnership advance the goals of the institution in ways that are true to the institution's mission and values?

Be alert to a partnership's optics. The promise of new funding streams or a new building can sometimes cloud a leader's perceptions about how a partnership might be perceived among campus stakeholders. Universities should not enter into partnerships without considering how the relationship might be perceived. Another consideration is who is in the partnership, as some campus constituencies could take issue with a particular business or sector. Perceptions matter and should be managed.

For example, some campus constituencies might consider some institutional partners to be controversial or less than desirable, or may question an institution's reasons for engaging in a partnership. Faculty and other stakeholders may feel that a university's engagement in partnerships detracts from its ability to deliver on its mission. Students may take issue with an institution's engagement in partnerships, perhaps arguing that the institution is too tied up in business dealings that take away from teaching and learning. The very nature of a partnership may come with unintended ramifications—such as when well-intentioned outreach to the community is perceived as paternalistic. Each of these scenarios can be addressed, but the point is that they need to be first anticipated and then addressed. Further, great care is needed to ensure that universities assess each opportunity for a partnership equitably, using the same criteria, regardless of other concerns that some university stakeholders may have. For example, considerations about the political leanings of a funder should be weighed the same regardless of where the funder may be on the political spectrum.

- As the university leader, have you fully thought through how a proposed partnership will be perceived through the respective lenses of all campus stakeholders?
- Has university leadership considered how stakeholders off-campus, including influential friends of the university, community leaders and elected officials, will perceive the partnership?
- Has university leadership sought and listened carefully to assessments of the optics of a given partnership by campus experts in communications, government relations and community relations?

Follow through continually to ensure a partnership is conducted well. Partnerships need to be conducted ethically and with integrity, and executing a partnership well is just as important. It is not enough to simply start a partnership.

Rather, persistence and consistency are required throughout the relationship's lifecycle to ensure that the partnership performs well and does what it is intended to do. It is imperative to deliver on promises to partners.

For these reasons, ongoing supervision of a partnership's operational effectiveness is imperative. Presidents must monitor partnerships for those considerations from the start of the partnership to its conclusion. Beyond those fundamentals, however, partnerships should be conducted well on an ongoing, operational basis. Successful partnerships typically have a designated point of contact with every entity that is involved. That person, not a committee, needs to be held accountable for the partnership's operations.

Frequent meetings of partners are essential to help develop a common vision for the partnership, a shared language for describing what it is they seek to do, and mutual goals and expectations around deadlines. If partners do not seem to be talking the same language, a third party might be useful to help translate.

Presidents should decide in advance what metrics they will use to gauge how well institutional staff and its partners are conducting a partnership's business operationally.

- In terms of day-to-day operations, is the partnership running smoothly? Is it meeting its goals? Is the partnership being managed well?
- Are details attended to? Are deadlines being met?
- If missteps occur, are they addressed effectively?
- Does the efficacy of the partnership's operations reflect well on the university and its mission?

Establish criteria for measuring results. As with any strategic undertaking by a university, explicit expectations about a partnership's results should be clarified in advance. That means there must be clear ways to measure progress and outcomes.

Planning for what constitutes success in a partnership should be a prerequisite that occurs before any partnership begins. Financial outcomes may be only part of the university's expectations for a partnership, and if that is the case, careful thought needs to be applied in defining other perhaps less tangible returns. Universities may want to engage outside counsel to assess a partnership's efficacy and impact.

- What does or should success look like?
- By what metrics should success be measured?
- How does the mission for the partnership link back to the institution's overall mission? How well does it serve students?
- What are some potential signals that a partnership is going awry?

Remain flexible. By their nature, partnerships may require an unprecedented level of flexibility on the part of universities. The success of many partnerships, for example, may be predicted on assumptions about interdisciplinary collaboration between academic and administrative units that may not have a strong record of working together. Collaboration between units that are traditionally "siloed" cannot be assumed, and part of managing a partnership may therefore include actively managing collaboration between those units.

Universities may also need to be flexible in terms of the speed at which a partnership is executed. It is cliché, but change in the private sector often comes at a much faster rate than it does in academe. A university's partners may want to move at speeds outside a typical university's comfort zone. Therefore, the success of a university partnership with an entity in the private sector may depend in part on the university's structuring the partnership in such a way that it can be executed faster than new initiatives are typically completed on a campus. Different ways of thinking and acting may be necessary.

Occasionally, there may be mitigating factors as to why a partnership should not proceed as fast as a private sector partner might wish. In such cases, it will be necessary for the university to articulate the reasons for a slower pace, and to convince its partner why such a strategy is necessary. In any event, agreeing on the pace for a partnership may require flexibility on the part of all partners.

The environment for higher education is evolving today at an unprecedented pace. So, too, is the environment in which most university partners exist. It should surprise no president, therefore, that the nature of partnerships in which universities engage might change even while that partnership is being executed. Revision in a partnership might manifest itself in a change in the partners themselves, a transformation in the market environment circumstances that fundamentally affects the way a partnership is executed, or any number of other forms. Many such events are impossible to predict. The important thing is that university leaders need to anticipate that changes will occur over the course of a partnership, and should be prepared to address them when they do.

- In planning a partnerships with partners who may wish to move faster than typical university processes, can approval processes be streamlined? How would that work?

- Can partnerships be executed as pilot programs that might eventually be adopted more widely? Could a new academic program, for example, start as a certificate and then be expanded to a degree program?
- If a partnership cannot proceed at the pace that a partner might like, is that grounds for not pursuing the partnership?

Communicate frequently about the partnership. A president and his or her team who engage in developing a partnership will know why the relationship was formed and what it is intended to accomplish. That same group will likely be privy to a regular flow of information and updates about the partnership. University leaders need to remember, however, that the rest of the campus community—to say nothing of the community beyond the campus—will not necessarily understand why the institution engaged in a partnership, and will not have the same access to information that shows the relationship's progress and effects. Uninformed critics both on and off campus can cast shadows on a partnership, however well intentioned the partnership is, and questions can arise about whether the partnership is a good use of institutional resources.

Presidents must address those potential concerns directly. An initial announcement about the partnership, while crucial, is not sufficient in and of itself. Campus memories about the purposes and scope of the partnership may be prone to evaporate shortly after the initial press release. Rather, continual communication about the partnership, disseminated regularly and sent broadly across stakeholder audiences, is essential. It may seem elemental, but it is up to the president to frame why the partnership was formed, to outline the benefits that the partnership will bring to the institution, and to communicate those goals regularly, along with updates about the partnership's progress. Presidents need to make a point of making themselves available to regularly communicate about the partnership. Consistent communications about the partnership and regular updates about its progress can pay significant dividends in diffusing potential criticism and, moreover, can help the entire campus community understand the benefits that the university can accrue from the partnership.

California State University Channel Islands faculty and students participate in a project at the Santa Rosa Island Research Station. More information about this partnership can be found on page 14.





Students explore the University of Central Florida's (UCF) campus. See page 20 to learn more about UCF, known as "America's Partnership University."



Nursing students participate in a program offered at the Missouri Innovation Campus. More information about this partnership can be found on page 12.

Part of developing a partnership, therefore, is developing a strategy for communicating about it to all who need to know about it. A related consideration is that transparency about the operation is critical to developing and sustaining a strong partnership. Further, transparent communications can serve to counter potential criticisms of the partnership. Apart from press releases and other standard channels, a university may want to develop a section of its website that is solely devoted to its partnerships. Similarly, it might want to use social media to get the word out. It is up to the president to see that messaging about partnerships and the university's engagement in partnerships is delivered regularly and consistently. It is worth adding that ongoing communication about partnerships is essential in helping an institution as a whole learn about the value partnerships can engender, and is an important strategy in developing an institutional culture that nurtures and supports partnerships.

- As part of planning for a partnership, is there a robust plan for communicating regularly and thoroughly about the partnership to all relevant stakeholders over the life of the partnership?
- How will the results of the partnership be communicated?
- Does communicating strategically about the partnership help in developing a culture that promotes partnerships as a long-term strategy for institutional vitality?

Plan for sustaining the success of the partnership throughout its lifecycle. Enthusiasm about a partnership can infuse the planning stage and early days of a relationship with considerable energy. Sustaining that energy throughout the course of a partnership's existence may be more of a challenge—but is essential for the partnership's success over the long term. Just as an institution allocates adequate staff time, money and other resources to start a partnership, it is just as important to ensure that adequate resources continue to be in place over the course of a partnership.

University leaders have a pivotal role to play in ensuring important partnerships remain institutional priorities. Leaders need to signal through actions and conversations that the partnership remains important. Going into a partnership, it is vital that the partners clarify and agree on their expectations for sustaining the relationship over time.

Examples of University Partnerships

Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area—*Tysons Partnership Collaboration*

The Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area is working with the Tysons Partnership, a P3 representing major landowners, employers, developers and others in Tysons, Va., who also share an interest in ongoing post-baccalaureate education for their employees, especially in the areas of cybersecurity, technology, financial services and data analytics. The collaboration potentially represents an opportunity to scale up arrangements that individual institutions might have with individual corporations. [For more information, contact the president & CEO, Consortium of University of the Washington Metropolitan Area.]

An important component of planning for the continuity of a partnership is to be explicit that if individuals who are associated with the partnership move on from their respective partner organizations—for example, if the president of the university steps down—the partnership itself will continue.

- What are the expectations for the life of the partnership? Is it a one-off, or can it and should it be sustained over time?
- Will partnership leaders remain engaged over time?
- Are goals realistic enough to be met regularly over a long time horizon?
- Are funding streams in place to sustain the partnership over time?
- What new or different structures might be needed to ensure the partnership endures?
- How will the partnership navigate changes in leadership among various parties?
- If a partnership's conclusion is open ended, how do the partners plan to sustain the partnership's energy over time? What specific steps will the partners take to renew enthusiasm for the project once initial energy starts to fade?

Have an exit strategy. In the enthusiasm to enter into a partnership, universities and their partners may neglect to anticipate the end of a relationship. Because many partnerships are formed for specific purposes, they may therefore have finite lives. It is essential to plan ahead for the end of a partnership's lifecycle.

- What circumstances will mark the end of the partnership? Do all partners have the same expectations about what will define the end of the partnership?
- What happens after the partnership ends? How might any of the partnership's assets be distributed?
- Do confidentiality agreements that pertain to a partnership extend beyond its endpoint?

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Legal issues are a key concern that needs to be addressed before entering into a partnership. Legal counsel should be engaged early to help guide parties to a structure that complies with applicable law, addresses any tax implications and minimizes the risk of the proposed arrangement. As a partnership becomes more complex, there will be a wider array of legal considerations that demand more robust scrutiny from legal counsel. For example, a research park collaboration between universities could involve setting up a new nonprofit board and establishing board policies. In a complex partnership involving multiple parties and revenue distribution, there are numerous legal issues that need to be addressed, such as licensing deals and royalties between the researchers, academic departments and universities. Financial obligations and commitments for each party need to be clear and recognize there could be unexpected expenses in the evolution of the partnership.

For university partnerships, basic legal considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Does state law authorize a state university to partner with a private entity and to what extent?
- Is it necessary/desirable to use a university-affiliated corporation to act as the partner?
- Does the tax status of the partner (tax-exempt or taxable) matter?
- Are any university "insiders" involved in the transaction, thereby triggering state and federal conflict-of-interest laws?
- Are there any restrictions in state law on the pledging or use of state assets?
- What board, system, state or other approvals are necessary?
- What legal risks can the university assume under state law (e.g., indemnity, guaranty, debt)?
- How do state procurement laws factor into the partnership?

Examples of University Partnerships

New Jersey City University—*University Place*

New Jersey City University (NJCU) is engaged in an ongoing $400 million public-private partnership linking the university's main campus and an adjacent neighborhood, bringing revitalization to Jersey City's west side. The development will provide students, faculty and others within the community opportunities for living, working, dining and shopping. The mixed-use project, which is being completed in phases, includes residential buildings, academic facilities, a center for performing arts, a supermarket, retail amenities and parking. The project is being financed and designed by developers. [For more information, contact the Office of the President, NJCU.]

NJCU's mixed-use development project consists of 630 luxury residential units and approximately 110,000 square feet of retail. This project was developed through P3 legislation and in collaboration with Claremont Companies, KKF University Enterprises and Crossroads Companies.



POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Public college and university leaders have a role to play in advocating for policies that are conducive to building university partnerships. Each campus operates in a different policy environment that will dictate the extent to which university officials can engage in P3s. Some states, such as Kentucky, have enacted legislation creating a consistent framework and regulations for state and local governments on P3s, which includes public colleges and universities.

Public college and university presidents should work in concert to examine policies in their systems and states regarding partnerships, and to explore ways to optimize the policy environment. In many cases, close work with the institution's government relations staff and governing bodies will be imperative.

Policy considerations for college presidents include the following:

- What are the local, system, state and federal policy parameters that affect the ability of the campus to pursue partnerships, including those with private sector entities? What policies hinder the ability of campuses to pursue partnerships? What partnerships are affected by these policies?
- What ambiguities and conflicts exist in these policies that could lead to questions over the legality of partnerships?
- What are some policy proposals for improving the climate for university partnerships while ensuring accountability and transparency with state dollars? What have other systems and states done with partnership policies that have been successful?

It is essential that discussions regarding the policy climate for partnerships be handled before university officials engage in substantive discussions on large-scale partnerships, as policy changes can take a significant amount of time to come to fruition, and some partnership opportunities may not be able to be put on hold to accommodate policy changes. Further, potential partners—especially those in the private sector—want assurances as to whether public colleges and universities in the state are even eligible to create partnerships.

NURTURING A CULTURE THAT SUPPORTS PARTNERSHIPS

As universities seek new tools to help their institutions survive and thrive in today's challenging and rapidly changing environment, partnerships are likely to be a more essential tool for university leaders. Given that, it may be in an institution's best interest to cultivate a culture that supports and nurtures partnerships. Some institutions may make subtle changes in their ways of working, while others may elect to go so far as to make partnerships a priority in mission statements.

One place to start in developing a culture that is conducive to partnerships is to complete a thorough review of all the partnerships in which the institution is already engaged. The campus community may be surprised by the extent of that activity, which provides a baseline on which to build.

Another part of developing a culture that supports partnerships includes establishing policies and procedures that support their development. At a minimum, institutions will want to establish baseline policies to guide vetting, approval and execution of partnerships. A logical next step might be to create operational mechanisms that support partnerships, such as channels for pilot testing new curricular responses faster than traditional approval processes might allow. Some institutions create offices that serve as central clearinghouses for the development, vetting and execution of partnerships. Such entities can serve as a gateway to third parties that seek ways to partner with the institution. They can also house staff who actively seek partnership opportunities.

It may be in an institution's interest to go further than that. Because partnerships require a certain degree of entrepreneurship, for example, university presidents should consider nurturing a campus culture that more readily turns to entrepreneurial solutions. That may require nudging campus colleagues to be more open to nontraditional ways of meeting challenges and solving problems. The overarching goal would be to create innate support for the development and execution of partnerships across the institution. Another tack is to intentionally hire staff who have a predisposition or experience in working with partnerships.

A university's ability to engage more broadly in partnerships may depend on the president's capacity to develop partnerships. Many presidents are entrepreneurial by nature, and engaging in more partnerships may be a matter of tapping more regularly into that skillset. But if a university leader is not innately entrepreneurial, he or she may have to work to develop those skills. In addition, universities that intentionally hire staff with entrepreneurial skills can draw on that talent to expand partnerships. Similarly, when recruiting faculty, it may emerge that some faculty may have already engaged in partnerships or are eager to participate in one.

CONCLUSION

Advancing the mission of public colleges and universities amid uncertain state funding and higher expectations will be difficult in the years ahead. Partnerships are one way for campuses to adapt and thrive in this environment. Regardless of how universities expand their capacity to engage in partnerships, the most salient takeaway is that they likely will need to do so in the future. Because partnerships will become a more prominent part of the tools that universities are likely to use in meeting their goals and fulfilling their missions, it will be increasingly incumbent on university leaders to build their own skills for engaging in partnerships. The suggestions in this report are a starting point for helping public higher education leaders meet that challenge.

While every campus is unique and each potential partnership presents its own challenges and opportunities, public universities should create the structure, policies and campus culture to take full advantage of these opportunities. Presidents will need to do all they can to build and expand an appetite for partnerships as part of the institution's culture. The value of partnerships should be written into the institution's strategic plan. Building a robust capacity for campuses and systems to create and maintain partnerships can have long-lasting economic, social and cultural benefits for students, campuses, communities and states. In short, doing partnerships right is well worth the doing.





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