# CREATE
COMMUNITIES CHANGE UNIVERSITIES

Power and Possibility of Partnerships Between Universities and Communities

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Fern Tiger 2014
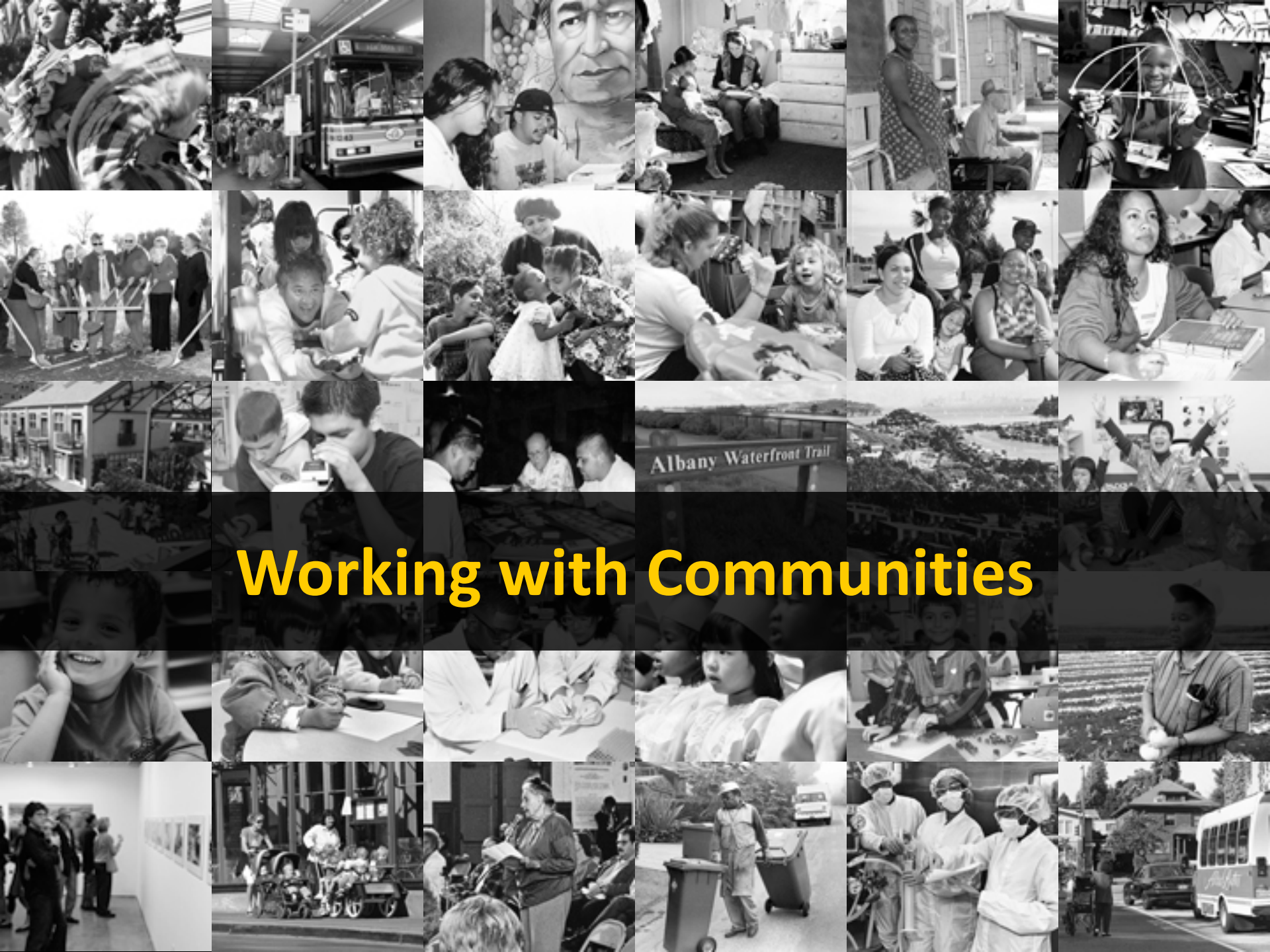
Working with Communities

The Power of Partnerships

- The Academy and The City: *A Long Tradition of Town and Gown*

- Changing the Tradition: *Universities and Communities at a Crossroad*

- Embracing Opportunities: *Learning from Others to Unleash the Power of University/Community Partnership*

"If you want to go fast, walk alone.
If you want to go far, walk together."

– African proverb

The Academy and the City:
A Long Tradition of Town and Gown

The Academy

Elite, often religiously-based havens
for the creation and study of knowledge.

The City

Gateways - flourishing political, economic, and cultural centers.

The Town/The Gown

- 1100s: Universities without campuses; masters rented lecture halls; students rented housing; cities provided "marketplace"

- Students /faculty wore distinctive academic garb; social symbol implying no manual work

- Students /faculty congregated in particular parts of the city

- Centuries of tension

Changing the Tradition
Universities and Communities at a Crossroad

The Town and The Gown: Why engage?

- Renews the **civic mission** of the public university
- Engages faculty in knowledge to **improve society**
- **Shares knowledge/resources** broadly, as prompted by values of a democratic society
- **Connects thought to action**, theory to practice
- Creates partnerships and clear expectations of consequences/benefits to **transform both parties**
- Increases **community understanding** (can impact **support for university goals**)
- **Illustrates commitment** by university to stakeholders
- **Expands/adds dimension** to learning and experiences
- Responds to **mutual self interest**

The Confusion

- Community engagement (an engaged university)
- Service vs. empowerment (problem with terminology: "urban-serving" universities)
- Public Affairs/ Public Relations
- Volunteerism / Service Learning
- Engagement to attain university goals (zoning, etc.)
- Public events
- Faculty as citizens and residents of neighborhoods (not as "representatives" of the university)
- Social embeddedness

Inherent Engagement

- **Big employer**; employees live in community
- **Landowner**
- **Resource**
- **Population engine** (in neighborhoods and beyond)
- **University growth** mirrors (and is tied to) economic development of community
- **Urban dynamics** impact student/faculty recruitment
- **Cultural**, entertainment, sports opportunities

Intentional Engagement

- **Teaching** that focuses on local issues; gets students out and into community
- **Research** focused on *community-defined problems;* faculty rewards for local research
- **Involvement** in local issues
- Working together to **build community capacity** *(empowerment, not "service")*
- Growth of **knowledge economies**

Gown and Town
Tensions/Ambivalence

- Separate governance
- Neighborhood impact
- Dominance of University perspective in dialogue;
- Land use, parking, traffic, voting, police/fire, tax exemption
- Incentives: universities need city approvals; city needs $ for services
- Proprietary resources
- Diversity (race and class)
- University not good at listening

Universities Think Communities Are:

- **Difficult to understand**
- **Process driven**
- **Disorganized**
- **Demanding**
- **Unreasonable**
- **Irrational**
- **Lacking "knowledge"**
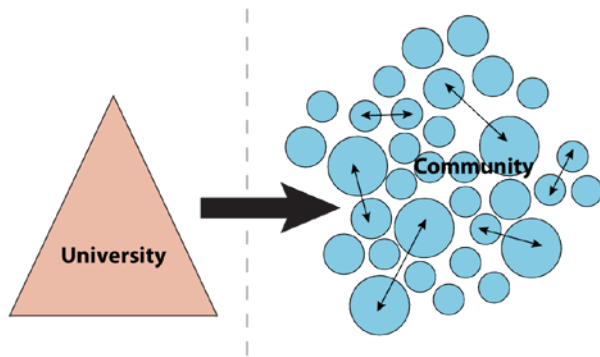- **Taking advantage of them**
- **Greedy**

Communities Think Universities Are:

- **Secretive / oblivious**
- **Big employers**
- **Bureaucratic, Corporate**
- **Elite (often arrogant)**
- **Monolithic**
- **Non-responsive**
- **Disrespectful of community knowledge**
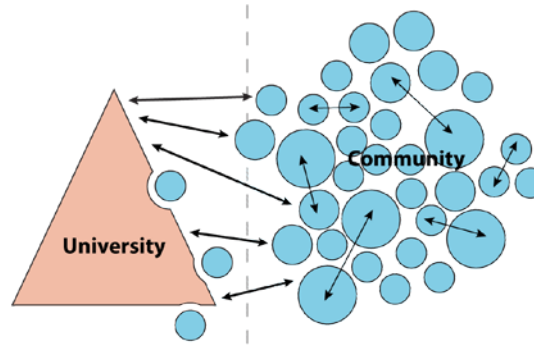- **Taking advantage of them**
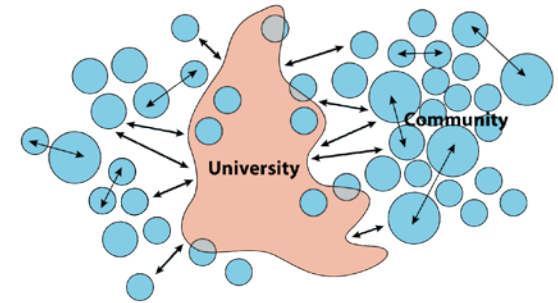- **Greedy**

Embracing Opportunities
Learning from Others to Unleash the Power of Partnership

University Offers Knowledge

Early Steps: Sharing Knowledge

Transformation of University and Community

Case Study: Arizona State University
A Plan to Create a Socially-Embedded University

Goals of ASU Project

- Examine history, programs, perceptions, policies, people in ASU and Greater Phoenix to flesh out and give life to concept of "deep community engagement" (social embeddedness)
- Create Plan with broad vision for transformative (transformational) partnership

Process/Methodology

- 150+ one-on-one stakeholder interviews
- Visits to 15 college campuses/communities; 70+ additional interviews (with univ and community)
- Research; best practices; analysis; meetings

Lessons Learned

- <u>It takes time</u> to *learn* how to move beyond "service" into mutually-beneficial relationships
- Creation of an umbrella entity often stymies <u>university-wide ethos</u>
- <u>Faculty buy-in</u> : key within U; buy-in from community beyond the obvious leadership is key for the community
- <u>University reward </u>structure needs to include support for engagement and community-based research
- Working with community is a <u>long-term process </u>with consequences if commitments not fulfilled
- Understanding complexities / dynamism of communities is an <u>interdisciplinary undertaking </u>(the academy is siloed)
- Communities don't perceive universities as vulnerable (well-connected)
- <u>University decisions</u> generally made without regard for community
- Activists don't see universities producing <u>analytical/organizing skills</u>
- <u>Not all faculty are suited</u> for community-involved work/research

"It's needs to be more than a program; it's an attitude, but often university people think they just need to create programs."

"University people don't see themselves as part of the community and they don't have a passion for change."

- from ASU interviews

The University/ Community "Quilt"

Creating positive change in the Community and also in the teaching, research, and service responsibilities of the University

S T R A T E G I E S

G O A L S	Teaching/ Learning	Research/ Discovery	Community Capacity Building	Economic Development /Investment	Social Development
University-wide Culture					
Internal/ External Structures					
Partnerships with Communities					
National Model					

Universities and the Urban Fabric
Examples

Universities and Communities Visited/ Observed

- Large Public Universities:
    - University of Washington Seattle
    - University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
    - Georgia State University, Atlanta
    - Georgia Tech, Atlanta
    - University of California, Los Angeles and Berkeley
    - University of Maryland, Baltimore County
    - University of Baltimore
    - Portland State University
    - University of Illinois, Chicago
    - Metropolitan University, Minneapolis
    - Rutgers / The State University of New Jersey, Camden

- Large Private Universities:
    - University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
    - University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Universities and Communities Visited/ Observed

- Small/ Smaller Private Universities:
  - Trinity College, Hartford CN
  - Occidental College, Los Angeles
  - Loyola University, Chicago
  - Roosevelt University, Chicago

Best Practices (some no longer operational)

- Georgia State University – RFP process for Freshman Learning Centers (multidisciplinary clusters – Atlanta-based Learning)

- Georgia Tech – commitment to adjacent community (evidenced in transparent master plan)

- University of Maryland Baltimore County – recognition of differences between experiential learning, internships, volunteerism, etc.

- Trinity College – massive financial commitment to The Learning Corridor; intensely engaged service learning

- Portland State – faculty-driven process to integrate engagement and city-focused research

- USC – definition of "neighborhood" with showcased results

- Occidental – patience!

Best Practices (some no longer operational)

- University of Minnesota – Council on Public Engagement reward system; college liaisons to spread the message

- University of Wisconsin Milwaukee kick off of "The Milwaukee Idea" – 10 initiatives; president's pledge of support; pulling programs together under one banner

- UCLA –relationships with nonprofits; small funding across city

- USC definition of "neighborhood" as tightly defined area surrounding campus; showcasing results

- University of Illinois Chicago Great Cities Initiative/ Institute

- UC Berkeley willingness to take risks, invest funds, in now defunct Metro Oakland Forum, commitment of highest level Univ, city, corporate leaders

Place-Based Engagement – Best Practices

- Campus is integrated into the surrounding neighborhood
- Community activities occur on campus and vice versa
- Easy-access, on-campus storefronts enhance community life and provide economic development opportunities
- Campus "green spaces" and sports facilities are pedestrian-friendly and open to the public
- Importance of regional signage and local "way-finding" from outside to inside and inside to outside
- Public transit specifically serves campus and surrounding neighborhood (esp bus & light rail)
- Campus presence and its activities attract other community institutions; community institutions attract university participation

University of Washington Tacoma - History

- Historically working class city; can do attitude; "in shadow of Seattle"

- Community fought for UW campus to be created; active leadership

- Re-purposed, renovated vacant industrial buildings; seamlessly integrated into downtown; created new center of city with UWT as hub

- Within the urban fabric

- 20 years later credited by community as having revitalized city

University of Washington Tacoma - 2014

- Positioned as "urban serving;" mission solidified in 2012 with new chancellor

- Served as "attractor" creating downtown arts/museum core

- Attracts students/faculty dedicated to community issues

- Strategic regional/community partnerships; child care, housing for students with children; YMCA

- Pedestrian-, transit-friendly

- Totally open campus as hub of city

- Currently searching for new leader: *Will purpose be intensified or diluted?*

Making it Happen

Key Questions

- Where does community fit in? Have they helped to design the current goals? Do they want to be involved? Are they part of the thinking?
- If this thinking is to be university-wide, how does that happen?
- Who controls the syllabus? How does this thinking get integrated into curriculum?
- How do you define community? Who really benefits?
- How do you spread the word? What's in a name?
- How do you make it last? How does it survive transitions and leadership changes?
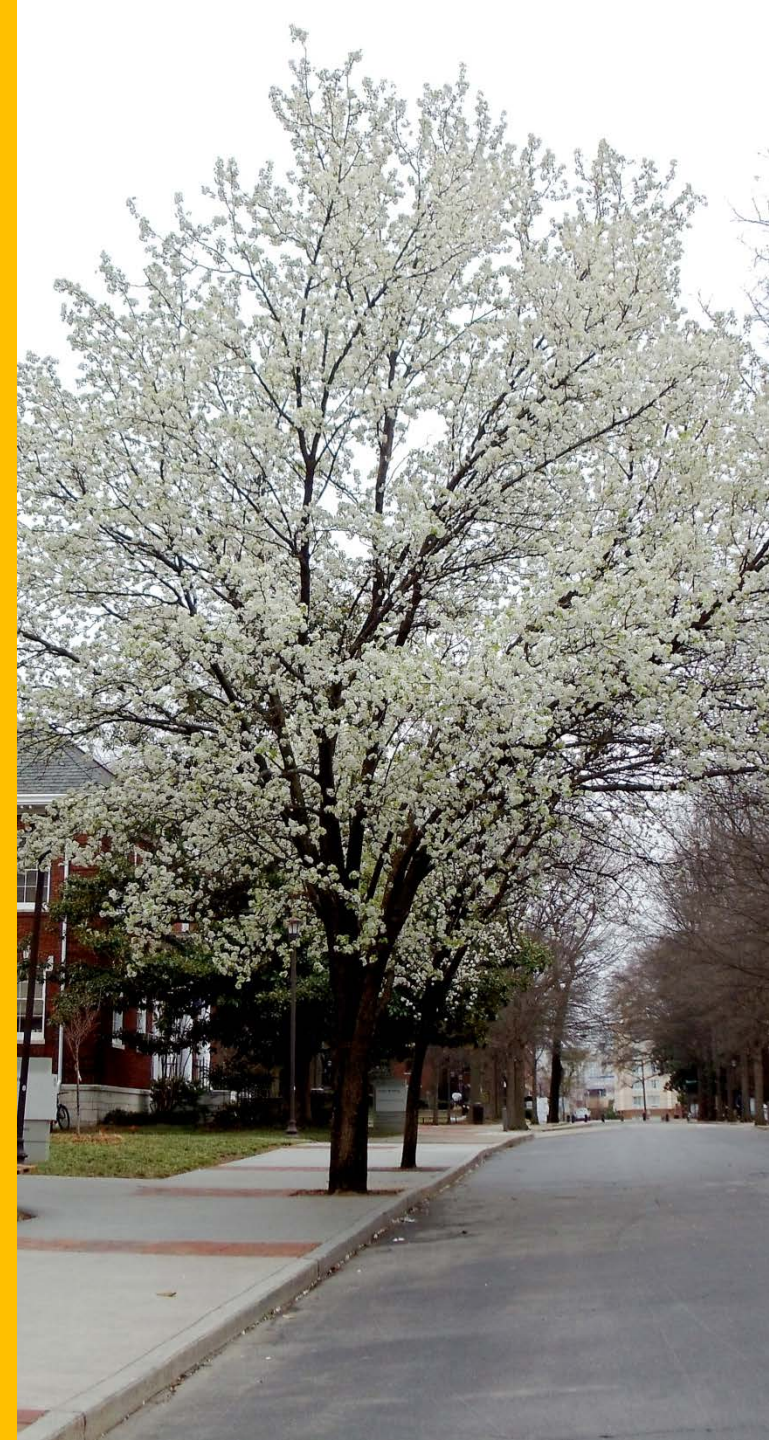
What Does it Take to Be Successful?

- Strong, working **definition of an empowered partnership**
- Shared **ethos** (evidenced by mission statement) broadly disseminated and understood
- The **"will" to be transformed** by the process and the solutions (coming from beyond the university)
- **Intentionality** of direction and transparency of decisionmaking
- Understanding of, and support for **community "empowerment"** (vs. "service" to the community)
- **Backing at the highest level** for a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach
- **Clear expectations** of university and community
- **Shared responsibility** for outcomes

Challenges

What gets in the way at the University?
- Lack of consistent, ongoing leadership
- Faculty/administration resistance
- Competition for funding sources
- Bureaucracy of university; culture vs. "organic" community culture
- Academic tradition of observing and analyzing rather than "action"
- Skepticism from community
- Developing meaningful metrics
- Learning to move beyond "service" and paternalism
- Rewards for global work vs. local
- Recognition of risk; need for patience
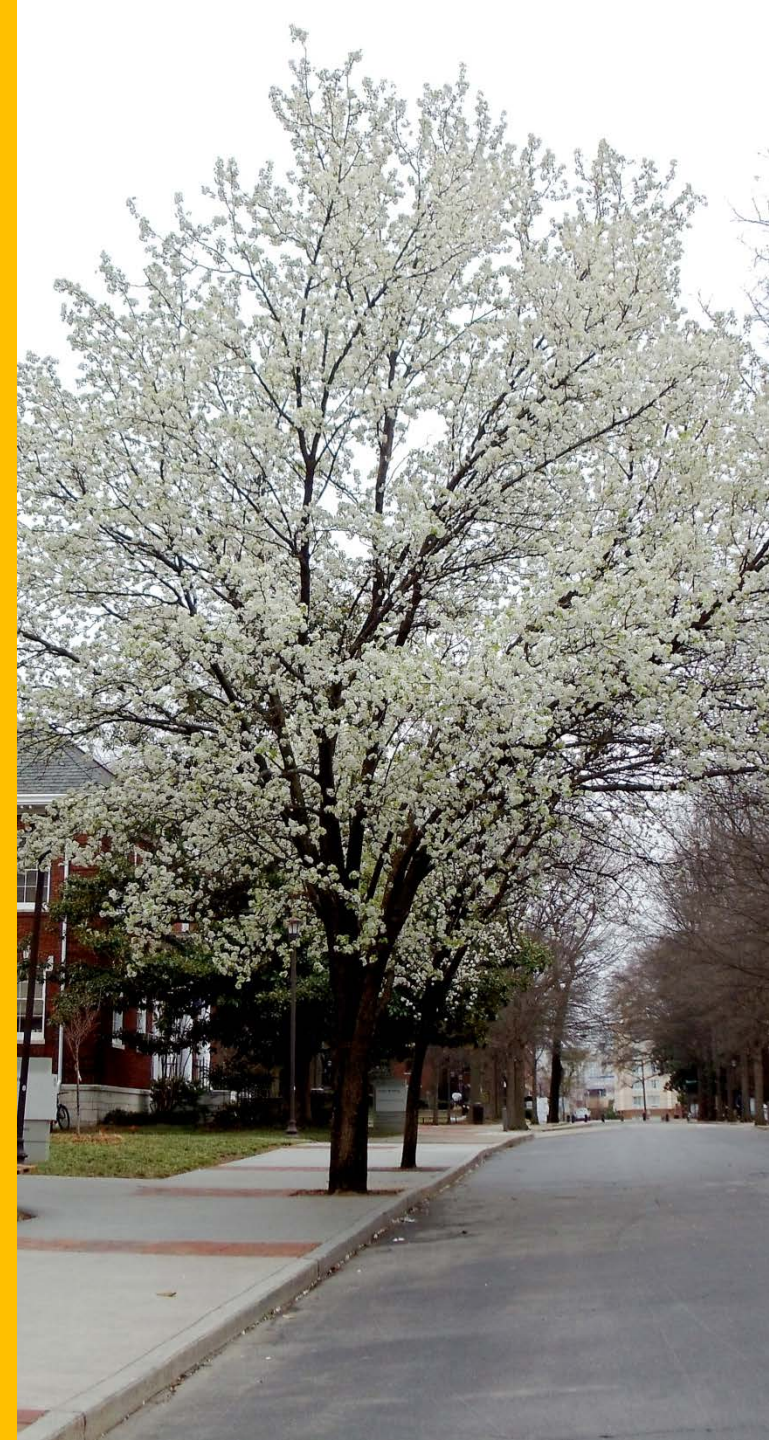**Change is Hard!**

Challenges

What gets in the way for the community?

- University schedule (not aligned to real life)
- Transiency of students and faculty
- Inconsistent engagement and institutional decisionmaking that doesn't tie to ethos (causing mistrust)
- Organic nature of community
- Skepticism within the community
- Paternalism of university ("service")
- Faculty discomfort in communities
Change is Hard!

What are the Opportunities in Coventry?

"To be truly socially embedded, a university needs to be "open" to dialogue and challenge. It needs to build different kinds of relationships that might go against its traditional self-interest. It requires building trust and being willing to be flexible and organic. The university would need to recognize the value of being interdependent with the community."

- California Community Activist

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University of Coventry 2014

ASU Downtown Campus – Phoenix, AZ

- Use of some existing downtown buildings + new

- Built through City tax dollars

- Public invited to use buildings; First Friday events

- Porous to community ?

- Student housing; light rail to other ASU campuses

- Efforts to engage

- *Some resistance to relocation; impact on local small biz?*

Georgia Tech, Atlanta

- Specific partnerships with site-based schools (tutoring, leadership development)

- Real estate development incorporating neighborhoods into planning; high level Director of Real Estate Planning with community view

- R.E. Director elected Chair of Neighborhood Planning Unit

- Transparency of master plan

Trinity College, Hartford CN

- Est. 1872; 120 years later surrounding neighborhood blighted

- Abandon campus for suburbs or engage to improve neighborhood?

- Engaged deeply on multiple fronts

- Office of Community Service and Engagement; Trinity Center for Neighborhoods; Community Learning Initiative *(not all in tact)*

- Biggest effort/longstanding impact: *The Learning Corridor* ($175MM project on campus): K-5, 6-8, HS, sports center

UC Berkeley *(How not to do it)*

- 142,000 sq' athletic facility + 900 parking spaces (improve athletic recruiting)

- Would destroy landmark Oak grove (40+ trees); lack of information

- Town highly educated, activist

- Ongoing tensions prior to this (lawsuits against other developments proposed by university)

- Protestors took to trees – 21 months

- $28M construction delays; $3M+ legal and security costs

- Damage to already fragile relations

Georgia State University

– Downtown Atlanta

– Innovative (and evaluated) freshman program to tie students into community, while simultaneously increasing retention rates

– RFP process for Freshman Learning Center (multidisciplinary clusters of academic courses focused on local topics – Atlanta-based Learning)

Occidental College, L.A.

– Small liberal arts college located in L.A.

– Community engagement highlighted in all materials

– Strong understanding of difference between service and empowerment at highest levels of institutions

– Bridging of classroom learning with lived experiences; curriculum-based experiential learning

– Three offices dedicated to connecting campus to community

– Patience!

Portland State University, OR

– 27,000 students; downtown Portland

– "PSU values its identity as an engaged university that promotes a reciprocal relationship between the community and the University in which knowledge serves the city *and the city contributes to the knowledge of the University.*"

– Engagement noticeable at every level of University; doesn't need a "center"

– PSU faculty gathered for two years to discuss how to teach to ensure two-way engagement