

Catalyzing Collaborations Through Strategic Facility Construction and Design

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Brief overview

The construction and facility design process can help create and build upon industry and university partnerships. An effective project requires strong leadership and collaboration from diverse voices. Because projects often take years from conception to completion, adaptability and flexibility is a key component for successful projects. Critical elements for success include fostering private industry collaboration, incorporating R&D and educational training in the design process, and sourcing the best options when financing facility development.

Use in U-I engagements outside of major metropolitan areas

This topic and discussions are focused on how strategic/facility planning, design and construction can foster industry collaborations in locations outside major metropolitan areas. There are many opportunities for industry partnerships and engagements. By incorporating these activities, we can advance positive partnership outcomes.

Key features

- **Innovation luminary:** Identify an evangelist. This is the person who sees the big picture, can break impasses, make the big, bold decisions and stay the course with a mantra akin to if we build it, they will come. Organizations must support this person with all the information needed (with hard data) so their “push” is grounded within the framework of sound investment and planning.
- **Stakeholder participants:** Select from a broad group that brings a diversity of perspectives to the table. Set engagement rules that make them stewards of the project as a whole, rather than focused solely on the needs of their unit.
- **Flexible planning:** A project typically will take many years to come to fruition, so build flexibility into the planning process. Every development phase will have additional successive details to be addressed, so build flexibility into your planning to avoid hemming in the project.

Key takeaways

- When complete, **the building can adapt** to programs and partnerships not even conceived of during the initial planning or design phases of the project.
- **The building is a programmatic blend** of research, teaching, and workplace that can support the needs of university and industry collaborations at all stages.

This toolkit is a product of the May 21-23, 2019 event hosted by UIDP and the University of Arkansas, “University-Industry Engagement Outside Major Metropolitan Areas and Megacities: Identifying Issues and Finding Solutions.”



“An effective project requires strong leadership and collaboration from diverse voices.”



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- **Project planning needs to include consideration for, and engagement of, partnerships with corporations, institutions and federal agencies.** Understanding the needs of potential partners is essential for laying appropriate groundwork to attract and accommodate partnerships. Considerations should include facility-based requirements, as well as governance policies.

Resources required to implement this tool

Resources are primarily personnel-based. Organizations will need appropriate personnel for planning and engagement activities, both internal to the university and external. These are often a combination of university administration, faculty and consultants.

Best practice examples

- **Rees Jones Hall at Texas Christian University** houses the Institute for Child Development and the Energy Institute. These are anchor programs in an interdisciplinary classroom building at the heart of the academic precinct on campus. The building serves as a non-denominational hub. No college has “ownership” of the building programs. Classrooms meet pedagogy requirements employed by a small minority, and the building is physically and programmatically connected to the campus library. A reading room surrounds an Incubator Lab—a building hub for campus and community collaborations.
- **Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute at the University of Utah** presents intentional programmatic collisions of residence life and curricula that support startup development. It has contributed to quintupling the number of student-led startups on campus in two years, and increased student engagement, enrollment, scholarship and funding, while bolstering the university’s national ranking for undergraduates and graduate programs.
- **Gates Vascular Institute at the University of Buffalo** evolved from a partnership between three independent organizations. When they discussed future capital project plans with their neighbors, they identified synergies between medical, research and entrepreneurial projects. By combining the three projects into one new medical research and entrepreneurial center collaboration, they were able to enhance innovation with new connections while realizing significant construction cost savings. Encouraged by the prospects of this multi-organization facility, they worked through legal obstacles, creating a path forward for this new 570,000 square-foot complex.