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4-11-2005

Scholarship in Action: Building the Creative Campus

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Recommended Citation

Cantor, Nancy, "Scholarship in Action: Building the Creative Campus" (2005). *Office of the Chancellor (2004 - 2013)*. 22.

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Scholarship in Action: Building the Creative Campus

**Keynote Address by
Chancellor Nancy Cantor
Syracuse University
April 11, 2005**

At the beginning of the academic year, I asked you to join me in exploring the soul of Syracuse. Today I am really pleased to have the chance to share with you how the campus and our extended community of alumni, trustees, and neighbors—near and far—have responded. I also want to keep moving forward by presenting to you my vision for scholarship in action, for building the creative campus.

The local media have been covering part of that vision, engagement with the city of Syracuse. This is a vital and exciting part of our overall plan, and today I'd like to talk to you about the fuller vision for Syracuse University—about how we intend to shape our investments in faculty, students, and programs.

This is a vision for the future, and so you are a key part of that future. Please feel free to give me your ideas, questions, and suggestions. It is my hope that Syracuse University will lead the nation as an institution of higher education for the 21st century.

The Soul of Syracuse

Shortly after I suggested that we explore the soul of Syracuse, the Syracuse University Library created a website (<http://libwww.syr.edu/soul/>) as a virtual community center, explaining that “We view our University community in its broadest sense—in the sense of fellowship, community of relations and feelings intended by its Latin origin *communis*.”

That website invited the entire community to reflect on the question, “What is Soul?” As of last month, the library website had 75,000 hits and posted 14 definitions of the word “soul,” 40 quotations, and 24 reflections. I'd like to share just a few of them with you.

- David Feldman, artistic director of the Armory Square playhouse, captured one of the keys to our community, remembering that Aristotle wrote in *The Poetics*: “Plot is the soul of tragedy.” “And,” Mr. Feldman added, “one might well say, culture is the soul of a community.”
- That soul is an active and expressive one, as a posting from the words of the abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher in 1887 suggests: “Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures.”

- The images of soul were broad and comprehensive, not insular and narrow. Graham Herbert, the rector of Lockerbie Academy, wrote in to say: “The soul is not a physical entity, but instead refers to everything about us that is not physical—our values, memories, identity, sense of humor.”
- And Catharine W. Rudnicki, an undergraduate, wrote: “The soul is the center. The heart of everything. Where things and people come together to create something meaningful.”

When I invited you to explore the soul of Syracuse, I suggested we come together to consider four questions that might frame the conversation:

- What do we mean by “liberal education” as preparation for world citizenship as well as for the professions?
- What critical societal issues can we tackle by bringing our diverse disciplines and expertise together?
- How can Syracuse build on its unique historical landscape as a place of innovation and of movements for human opportunity?
- In a society where knowledge is power, how should the University serve generously as a power broker?

Since then, an amazing amount of activity has taken place. In fact, the inaugural year calendar has included 139 events—lectures, cultural offerings, celebrations, conversations, discussions, focus groups, symposia, conferences, seminars, and community programs.

Special recognition is due to the many staff, 874 in all, from all over campus, who discussed the four questions at focus groups in January, February, and March. I was also really pleased by the student forums, including among them three open forums with me, and discussions by the Honors Program on the theme of “Connected Communities: Syracuse and Us.” I can’t begin to give enough thanks to the Inaugural Year Committees and to Tom Wolfe and Mary Jane Nathan. I must just say Thank You.

Turning to what we have learned, I first want to underscore your willingness to engage the topic and your openness to discussion and difference. I find a strongly enterprising streak in Syracuse that mixes optimism and realism and the will to keep at it, whatever “it” demands. Perhaps you have been inspired by the voices of courage that are so much a part of the history of this region, voices that have encouraged bravery and a commitment to social justice. Someone posted on the library website an 1890 quote from Elizabeth Cady Stanton, that great fighter for women’s rights, and I think it’s entirely appropriate as a frame for today:

“The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us, and from motives of policy are silent when we should speak, the divine floods of light and life no longer flow into our souls.”

Scholarship in Action

So let's begin with scholarship in action.

At Syracuse University, our great strengths are based on the interactive nature of many of our programs, where faculty and students learn, discover, and create through deep engagement with practitioners and the world. We see this clearly, among others, in the work of our journalists, artists and architects, experts on global affairs and public administration, on technology or information studies. Our newest degree programs—such as Music Industry and Arts Journalism—and our cross-campus Renee Crown Honors Program and Soling Program have this profile of breaking new ground, as professors, students, and practitioners intersect on and off campus.

Indeed, the events of this inaugural year have displayed this central element in the soul of Syracuse—*scholarship in action*. Some programs have addressed critical societal issues close to home such as last week's "Upstate: Downtown" symposium on Syracuse and the shrinking city. Some have been as universal as "Does Marriage Matter?" or "The Fitness and Fatness of American Youth." Still others have been as global in scope as "Governing the Internet: Global Rules for Advancing the Information Society."

Creative Exchanges

Syracuse University is also a place where creative exchanges can occur relatively easily across disciplines and colleges. This has been evident for years, for example in our Department of African American Studies and in our Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts, as well as in our more recent endeavors—on National Security and Counter-Terrorism and on Disabilities Studies, Human Policy and Law.

This creativity has also been evident in the inaugural year calendar of events ranging from the film festival entitled "Laughing With Us: Comedy and Disability," presented by the Beyond Compliance Coordinating Committee, to the exhibition at Light Work/Community Darkrooms of Lonnie Graham's extraordinary interviews and recordings of people of Asia, Africa, and North America, and the Saturday Morning Physics demonstrations on "Soft Matter: Geometry and Materials." An incredible array. You should look at the calendar (<http://soulofsyracuse.syr.edu/calendar/>).

Diversity and History

Syracuse University respects its heritage and seeks to share its richness with everyone. That is why we invited members of the Onondaga Nation to participate in the inauguration, and I was thrilled that the Tadadaho, the spiritual leader, Sid Hill, and the clan mothers agreed to join the academic procession.

You may recall that the Tadadaho invited me to visit. I accepted his invitation to speak with the Onondaga clan mothers and chiefs in the Longhouse. We hope to build a

strong relationship between the University and the Onondaga and with other members of the historic Haudenosaunee confederacy of nations.

History, whether near or far, lives in the present and must be acknowledged. I am very pleased that, as a part of the inaugural year, Assistant Professor Joan Hart Willard and a cast of student actors performed the play *The Women of Lockerbie* at Syracuse Stage, with audiences including three area high schools, the Syracuse University Remembrance Committee, the Lockerbie Scholars, and families of the Pan Am Flight 103 victims.

Knowing the past also brings with it responsibility to “bare the Soul of Syracuse,” as one inaugural year symposium began to do—noting that even as this university has shown courage in providing opportunity for some, it has also turned its back on others at times.

As I told students attending an inaugural year forum on diversity, taking the historical perspective reveals the patterns of opportunity—and the lack of opportunity—over time. Juxtaposing the historical and the contemporary makes it possible to recognize how boundaries of race, class, religion, and nationality have persisted over time. We can also perceive the urgent need to come together as preparation for life in an ever-more diverse world in which both connections and conflicts are global.

The excellence of education can well be measured in this world by our ability and willingness not to sit passively and comfortably with our separateness and our habits of mind, but instead to actively engage with people and ideas, however hard this work turns out to be.

We want Syracuse students to feel they have been given real opportunities in settings where those with diverse interests and backgrounds can find ways to engage each other.

This was the message that emerged when the Gateway Fellows held an inaugural year conversation with their students about the opportunities that college life provides. As the students described it: “Much greater diversity than high school ... the willingness to be around people who are different ... preparation for the workplace ... greater understanding of the world ... quashing ignorance.”

At the same time, they powerfully depicted the difficulties of engaging these opportunities and their reluctance to “just be pc.” Politically correct or not, there is a vibrancy that comes from engaging difference, and we learn from both the differences exposed and the solidarity that sometimes follows.

Engaging the World

There is much boundary-crossing to do as SU engages the world.

Discovery and learning at Syracuse have no physical boundaries as we test ideas in the marketplace, be it through community geography, social entrepreneurship, technology commercialization, or school reform, or through immersions on theater row or on Wall Street, or through partnerships with non-governmental organizations abroad and not-for-profits in Syracuse.

We have significant precedents for engaging the world in all of our professional schools and in University-wide internship programs. We should take our traditions even further, aggressively connecting to the world through active engagement with community, industry, practitioners, governments, and the professions at home and abroad.

The power of our discoveries and ideas will be enhanced as we continue to forge sustained alliances with our connected communities. These can range from the industrial partnerships we form for technology transfer in our New York State Science and Technology Law Center to our creative collaboration with the Everson in the Everson Teen Art Gallery, which will be hosted in our new downtown Warehouse.

We know how to do this kind of partnering—as Jerry Suran, the former manager of General Electric’s Electronics Laboratory in Syracuse, reminded us in an inaugural year symposium on “Remembering the Past Soul of Syracuse.” In fact, we are quite good at it, and we want to do more.

In essays this year, 26 student orientation leaders told us that exploring the soul of Syracuse also meant learning more about the local community and its relationships and connections to the University.

As part of the inaugural year, we asked our students, faculty, and staff to tell us about ways they are already engaged in significant initiatives here in Central New York and throughout the country and the world. At this point, we have received 475 submissions from all sectors of the University. These represent really major and sustained programs such as:

- Syracuse faculty and students are investigating ways to intervene with teenagers who are at risk for HIV in programs at the Southwest Community Center in Syracuse and also in Macon, Ga., Columbia, S.C., and Providence, R. I.
- Others are trying to intervene in childhood obesity in Syracuse.
- Some are working to prevent violence among Syracuse schoolchildren.
- Yet another project seeks to identify 750 gifted students in Harlem schools and provide them with challenging course content over the Internet.

Meanwhile, staff focus groups have urged that we be more explicit about the connections between challenges we see abroad—from illiteracy to hunger to terrorism—and the hurdles that face our city and region here at home.

In fact, the *historical landscape* of this region is a living museum for anyone with an interest in human opportunity, innovation, and democracy. The region was home to the first Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, a headquarters for the Underground Railroad and the abolitionists, a site for the Erie Canal, and home to the democratic confederacy of the Haudenosaunee that is reflected in our federal system of government.

Our *contemporary landscape* reflects all of the challenges of our world: racism; transnational citizenship; the transition from a manufacturing to a knowledge economy; environmental sustainability; and inadequate access to affordable housing, health care, and quality education.

And there are willing partners in our midst to speak about it, as Adam Banks, a faculty member in our writing program, found when he offered a course at The Groove downtown on “An Introduction to African American Rhetoric,” exploring Black history from Soul to Speech.

When we surveyed those who led inaugural year events about liberal education, one of them said a remarkable thing: “The goals of a liberal education are to enable a broad swathe of the population access not only to skills that enable opportunity for them, but also to skills that enable them to analyze power relations in society. If knowledge is power, then fairness means that those who are getting this knowledge should understand the relationship to power.”

Perhaps that is why Joyce Latham, executive director of the Onondaga County Public Library System, entitled her inaugural year lecture “On a Mission: The Public Library as an Agency of Social Justice.” Or why the School of Education led an inaugural year conference for school administrators and educators on “What Every Public School Leader Needs to Know.” Sharing knowledge generously is a life and death matter in a knowledge economy.

We must share that knowledge in sustained and reciprocal partnerships at home—such as in the Southside Entrepreneurship Project or the Hunger Project—and abroad, such as an opportunity next fall to learn on site in Ireland what it meant, and still means for millions of people around the world, to be “beyond the Pale.”

Even as we strive to counteract the unintended negative consequences of our discoveries—such as the digital divide that has arisen as a consequence of the information revolution—we will both enliven our university and educate for world citizenship.

A Plan for the Future

So let's consider a plan for the future.

As we think about where Syracuse University should be five to ten years from now, we want the reputation and visibility of the *entire* university to be as good as its individual parts—as outstanding as Newhouse or Maxwell, as well-known and celebrated as our Division of International Programs Abroad and our championship athletic teams. We should be known nationally and internationally as a thriving example of a university where excellence is connected to ideas, problems, and professions in the world—a place where excellence is tested in the marketplace.

As we build on traditions of excellence in The College of Arts and Sciences, the focus should be on scholarly areas in the humanities and the sciences that also connect to the world, such as Religion and Society or the Life Sciences. In addition, we want to build excellence in our professional schools in a very disciplined and focused way by connecting our emerging strengths in business, law, and engineering, for example, to our highly visible strengths and to the core of the University, creating truly interdisciplinary areas that provide rich opportunities for new approaches and ideas—in other words, creating contexts that act as catalysts for discovery.

We have a history—a soul if you will—that is enterprising, open to creative exchange, willing to do scholarship in action, diverse in disciplinary passions, attuned to community at home and abroad, ready to try to make a difference.

This soul can be seen in the pioneering contributions of former faculty member and noted historian of religions Huston Smith, featured in the documentary “A Seat at the Table: Struggling for American Indian Religious Freedom.”

Its diversity can be seen in “Collective Soul,” a University College project that collects perspectives from the many voices it serves, from school children to part-time adult learners, community leaders, and local employers.

We share a hope in our ability to keep attracting talent—students, faculty, staff, programs and partners—with the will to “color outside the lines,” so that the experience of Syracuse can be transformational—changing our disciplines and our selves for the better.

To reach our goals, I believe we should make transformational investments in people, programs, and spaces and places that strengthen our ability to do *scholarship in action* across a diverse set of intersecting fields. These investments would ensure a steady stream of *enterprising students* at Syracuse. They would also reinforce our *engagement with the world* by sustaining a presence in the community, across the nation, and around the globe.

Accomplishing this vision will require both an infusion of new funds—from a major fundraising campaign and an enhanced profile of sponsored projects—and a disciplined strategy of allocation of the resources we already spend.

Everyone will have a role to play in these investments, from deans and department chairs to Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, and Vice Presidents. Implementing the vision entails more than money. It demands a thoughtful examination of our practices and policies, from how we reward and evaluate faculty and staff to how we recruit and support students. This, in turn, will depend on the wisdom and good will of many—from Senate committees to networks of Syracuse alumni and friends in professions and places in which we want to enhance our visibility and solidify our presence.

Today, it is my hope to start a new phase of our conversation: about building the creative campus—with opportunities for scholarship in action, for enterprising students to come here and to flourish, and for programs and enduring partnerships beyond our campus. Toward that end, I shall turn to a set of my own suggestions for investments in the creative campus and a “call to discussion” among relevant players.

Faculty and Doctoral/Professional Excellence

First, let’s consider faculty and doctoral/professional excellence.

The academic reputation of the University and the quality of the education we can offer is defined by the quality of our faculty, which is extraordinary and deserves investment in their fields of interest. I recommend that we invest in a disciplined, focused, but aggressive way in areas of faculty interest that build on existing strengths, link thematically across and within colleges, and present opportunities for scholarship in action to thrive at Syracuse. We are seeking synergies not only across disciplines, but also with practitioners in industry, the professions, and our many communities.

Looking at our traditional strengths and building on the themes of the Academic Plan, we should consider investments in three very broad areas that bring everybody in some way under the umbrella:

- 1) Science and Technology
- 2) Human Needs, Social Policy, and Community and Economic Development
- 3) Public Humanities, Public Communication, and the Arts.

Specific examples might range from a cluster in citizenship, social thought, and religion to one in cell signaling and biomedical engineering or one in transnational feminism. I mention these areas only as illustrative examples of crosscutting work already underway at Syracuse—work that ties together different scholars with diverse perspectives and disciplinary expertise.

Now, how might we make such investments?

First, an investment might take different form in different areas. For example, to build some clusters we might recruit a senior faculty from the outside in an area in which we have faculty strength here already. We want to galvanize links across departments or colleges, perhaps supplementing that senior appointment with three or four more junior appointments spread across colleges/departments.

In other cases, rising stars, both on campus and recruited from outside, might be pulled together. The aim is to find colleagues in the focal areas, here and elsewhere, who will collaborate in work of intellectual richness and potential for future impact.

Second, and I cannot underline the importance of this enough, it is very likely that these clusters will be greatly enhanced by a substantial investment in financial support for graduate or professional students in the various disciplines linked in the clusters.

The most successful of such clusters would constitute thriving inter-generational communities of scholars, graduate/professional students, and undergraduates engaged directly in the discovery mission, satisfying a growing desire expressed by our students in this inaugural year to be exposed to work that integrates different methods and perspectives in cross-college capstone courses.

What will these crosscutting investments mean for nurturing the disciplines?

In selecting areas for investment, it will be critical that deans, department chairs and faculty leaders consider those thematic clusters that simultaneously strengthen the disciplines, with faculty appointments and graduate/professional support, and link across them.

For example, in planning the new humanities center in Tolley, Dean Newton and her colleagues in The College of Arts and Sciences are looking to feed the core disciplinary work on epistemology and philosophy of religion while fashioning new links to the Maxwell and Newhouse schools.

The same can be said of work across colleges in the broad area of information assurance that builds capacity within the College of Engineering and Computer Science and the School of Information Studies, while linking to our substantial expertise elsewhere on campus in public policy, public communications, management and law.

As the funding for these investments will, by necessity, involve not only new University fundraising but also allocations of college resources—perhaps, we hope, enhanced by a new budgeting system—the selection of investment areas should match the internal priorities of each college, as well as contribute to our excellence as a whole.

Now, how can we implement these investments in ways both feasible and practical that genuinely nurture the kinds of collaborative teaching and public engagement that interdisciplinary scholarship in action most promises?

There are many practical questions surrounding such investments, but perhaps none so burning as these. Deans and department chairs will have to collaborate to consider new support mechanisms to make collaborative teaching and engagement work.

Most importantly, cross disciplinary scholarship in action often means that teaching is taking place side-by-side with scholarly work, and oftentimes it is outside the formal classroom and difficult to evaluate.

Moreover, as much of this work may fall between the proverbial disciplinary cracks, and involve public collaborations and partnerships, traditional metrics for evaluating excellence are hard to apply to these efforts. In light of our long traditions of excellence in scholarship in action, across all our colleges, I believe that Syracuse can and should play a national leadership role in working on expanded guidelines for the evaluation of faculty excellence.

Accordingly, I would ask that the Academic Affairs Committee of the Senate undertake a working study of these issues as they are manifest across campus, and that departments and colleges simultaneously work on new guidelines for tenure and promotion and the evaluation of scholarship in action, especially as it implicates collaborative research, teaching, and engagement.

We also need to provide the kinds of breadth of evaluation that encompasses many superb forms of public scholarship and activism, making it ever more possible to attract and retain a diverse group of scholars committed both to their scholarship and to their many embattled communities of race, ethnicity, nationality, or sexuality. There should be no need to sacrifice tenure in order to be able to do cutting edge scholarship in action.

Access for Students Eager to Make the Most of Opportunity

Now, let's turn to access for students who are eager to make the most of that opportunity.

To build the most vibrant educational environment possible, we must continue to attract excellent undergraduates with diverse interests and experiences, especially those for whom a Syracuse education can make a real difference with new opportunities to “color outside the lines.”

As so many alumni have told me: “Syracuse took a chance on me, and I made the most out of that opportunity.” I hear this constantly, from women astronauts like Eileen Collins to risk-taking investment gurus such as Marty Whitman; from conceptual artists such as Sol LeWitt to technology executives like Nick Donofrio and media stars like Bob

Costas. Rarely are these highly successful people doing now what they specifically learned at Syracuse, but all of them learned an enterprising attitude so deep in the Soul of Syracuse that *Forbes.com/Princeton Review* rated us the 7th most entrepreneurial campus nationwide.

How do we make sure that we are still giving opportunity to those that will make the most of it, in a day and age when college costs are ever-more burdensome and when an emphasis on standardized measures may well obscure from view the diamond-in-the-rough who would really flourish at Syracuse?

We are proposing access initiatives with more financial aid to encourage students from lower- and middle-income families, including students who may be the first generation in their families to go to college. These access initiatives will be a major focus of campus-wide fundraising in our upcoming campaign.

As with our faculty investments, though, these initiatives serve us well only if we change some of our admissions and recruitment tools so we can find these students and keep finding them. Accordingly, I have asked Newhouse Dean David Rubin and Vice President David Smith to co-chair a campus committee to consider how we might identify and recruit this kind of enterprising talent and energy for Syracuse.

We want students who bring to the table diverse backgrounds—life experiences with disability, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and race. These differences, when engaged, for example, in our new program of inter-group dialogue courses and residence hall programs, will educate everyone about life in an increasingly diverse democracy.

We are, at the end of the day, more interested in getting the student who, with the opportunity given here, will change the world—and perhaps make the University famous—than the student, wherever they are and whoever they are, who wants to come to a famous university for the luster of its name but might then coast through life afterwards.

Engagement with the World—Downtown, Nationally, and Globally

With these faculty investments and these student investments, we are ripe for engagement with the world—downtown, nationally, and globally.

As we make these major commitments to faculty and students, we must “house” them in spaces as innovative and enterprising as they deserve. I am glad to say that the plans that Vice Chancellor Deborah Freund outlined on March 30th to spend \$258 million in new and renovated academic space on campus and in the city, meet that challenge well.

These investments complement what we want to do with people and ideas, whether in the technology-intensive classrooms available to all in the new Whitman School building or in the interdisciplinary science space in the to-be Life Sciences

Complex, whether in the seminar rooms and public spaces planned for the Humanities Center at Tolley or in the geographical information systems laboratory with a community geographer to be housed in Crouse Hinds.

At the same time, it's critical that we be engaged with the world and the pressing concerns of the day, including different voices seeking to be heard and the different practitioners in the fields and industries in which our faculty have roots, our students have ambitions, and our friends and alumni have connections.

To do this we are reaching out beyond our "Hill," renovating and leasing spaces, establishing new programs and sustained presences in downtown Syracuse, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles, and abroad in programs from London to Beijing.

From these centers of activity we will strategically connect to other locations around the world—underlining the global nature of "local" issues and industries, and the emerging opportunities for collaboration.

How shall we take our faculty and staff committed to scholarship in action and our enterprising students out into the world of practitioners, industry, neighborhoods, and around the world of governments and non-governmental organizations? In this case, I would also argue for a quite disciplined and focused strategy of investment, looking for places and partners in areas where we have real academic strength, where there is both human and community need and excitement, and doing it in a way that we know we can sustain programs, partnerships, and a record of discovery. In other words, our investments off campus should mirror in form and content those we are making on campus.

Let me give some illustrative examples of this "engaging the world" strategy, starting with some of the recently publicized investments in downtown Syracuse. As a campus, we already do a great deal of work downtown, be it through the Shaw Center for Public and Community Service, in internships arranged through schools and colleges, or in our many clinics in the College of Law, the School of Education or the College of Human Services and Health Professions. This will and should continue.

At the same time, I believe we need to build a programmatic, sustained presence in downtown Syracuse, and we are doing this as the opportunity arises. The strategy is to focus in these three broad areas that match the broad content areas outlined above for faculty and doctoral/professional excellence investment.

We are being opportunistic in which specific projects come first. For example, we needed to find relocation space for the School of Architecture and new space for the advertising design and communication design programs in VPA and for the new Goldring Arts Journalism program in the Newhouse School.

By acquiring and renovating The Warehouse in Armory Square, we will meet our space needs and be able to provide our students and faculty in this key area of public humanities, public communication and the arts with superb opportunities to connect with the Everson, the Cultural Resources Council, and many downtown arts organizations, such as The Redhouse, the Landmark Theatre, and the Museum of Science and Technology.

Similarly, the newly leased space for the Community Folk Art Center and the Paul Robeson Performing Arts Company on East Genesee Street will facilitate new exchanges with Syracuse Stage. Each of these connect with some of our best academic programs. With partners nearby, each will have new natural affiliations, ready-made avenues for creativity in action. The benefits for all involved are substantial, and the vibrancy of exchange will surely enhance our city as well.

The same can be said for initiatives in the other two broad strategic areas of focus. The Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems, for example, is perfectly located in its downtown headquarters—actually quite near our East Genesee arts center—to facilitate academic/industry partnerships and serve both as a test-bed of discovery at the heart of work in technology and science and as an engine for economic development.

Current and future neighborhood initiatives—like these we’re starting already in the south side of Syracuse—will include work on entrepreneurship, arts and media, and issues involving families and youth. These will draw from all over our campus, including the entrepreneurship program in the Whitman School, public relations and newspaper programs in the Newhouse School, the Department of Marriage and Family Therapy in the College of Human Services and Health Professions, and the Department of African American Studies in The College of Arts and Sciences.

Most importantly, the neighborhood initiatives are being fully coordinated with a very organized neighborhood group and a community and economic development initiative facilitated by the Gifford Foundation. This must be a reciprocally beneficial investment if we are all to sustain our work.

The aim is to start where we are already active and excellent and where there are real opportunities for sustained programmatic efforts.

Meanwhile, as with the investments on campus, there are many practical aspects of implementation that also require attention, such as transportation and security and the design competition for our Connective Corridor, a public/private partnership. Again, partnerships are at the center of our approach, and we are quite happy to see the enthusiasm of Niagara Mohawk/National Grid, Congressman Jim Walsh, Senator Chuck Schumer, the University Hill Corporation and the East Genesee Regents Association, among many others collaborating on this project.

What is most important to watch in our downtown initiatives is that they do more than connect us to the city. They also connect us to areas of focused investment nationally and around the globe. For example, our new programs and spaces in New York City and Los Angeles overlap in focus with programs in the Warehouse and on East Genesee Street that are being run by Visual and Performing Arts, Newhouse, Architecture, and Arts and Sciences.

The entrepreneurship and policy work in the neighborhood initiatives will surely find a complement as we enhance our presence at the Greenberg House in Washington, D.C. Questions of the environment under scrutiny in the Center of Excellence—both how we sustain resources such as water and renewable energy and what a livable indoor built environment can be—are also playing out in places abroad in which our faculty and students are studying, from Costa Rica to South Africa.

I truly believe that our strategy of engagement will make us better connected at home and more effective in our work abroad. For example, at the same time as our Department of African-American Studies is expanding its Community Folk Art Center and Robeson Performing Arts Company's presence in downtown Syracuse, it also is taking its students and faculty to study in the African Diaspora, in a newly designed Pan-African Master's Program. The School of Architecture is working both to establish the UPSTATE Institute downtown and to integrate it with a three-semester degree program in Florence, New York City and Syracuse.

As the world faces issues of ethnic conflict, environmental sustainability, and transnational resettlement, Syracuse serves as a local microcosm of those challenges. And the more we engage our own city and region, the more we will feel the world's presence, make connections, and gain insights into happenings in other places. We will become better world citizens and scholars, even as we become better partners and neighbors at home.

Creating Social Capital

So, at the end of the day—or should I say five to ten years from now—what we want to see at Syracuse, on campus, downtown, and in many places nationally and globally to which we reach in our scholarship and studies, is what Robert Putnam would call genuine social capital, or the benefits that come from sustained partnerships that create networks of trust, innovation, and collaboration.

We want to see this emerge from the faculty and doctoral/professional excellence investments, from the access to opportunity for our enterprising students, and from the engagements we energetically sustain in our ever-broadening world. We want to build the kinds of social capital—diverse in its engagement of expertise, talents, backgrounds, and generations—that foster innovation and make a difference.

To do this we need to keep exploring, asking the following questions:

- How do we forge connections between people and ideas and cultures that otherwise remain disconnected, even divided, to the detriment of all?
- How do we build connected communities that are not insular and exclusionary, but instead, again to use Robert Putnam's notion, serve as "bridges" to sharing knowledge and experience generously.
- How do we engage in as much community building on campus as off campus? How do we make sure to encourage a circular movement of people and ideas, up and down our "hill," something that the Connective Corridor aims only to start?

As a social psychologist, I come to these questions and this topic of connectedness with a firm belief that individual growth and well-being is largely a function not of what we do in isolation, the thoughts we have by ourselves and about ourselves, but rather of the things we do together.

We learn from the vibrancy of difference and from the solidarity that follows from it. Citizenship is both about what you do yourself and about making common cause with others. Examining ourselves and our own community is critical to education, but it sometimes happens best in the company of others.

The empathy of mind we develop as we get in the lives and walk in the shoes of others becomes a looking glass also to see and work on ourselves. As we do this, we'll each be better people, and we'll all be in a better-connected community. I think that is partly why the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke of the freedom that would both come from and be represented by a broadly diverse group of people holding hands.

In the same way, the excellence that will come to Syracuse University from this collective exploration and these campus-wide, city-wide, nationwide and global investments is, I believe, well worth the effort.