



# Fulfilling Cleveland State University's Roles as Educator and Anchor Through an "Education Park" Model

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As an urban anchor institution located near the heart of downtown Cleveland, Ohio, Cleveland State University (CSU) has sought to respond to a multiplicity of economic and social demands. At its core, CSU's mission is to encourage "excellence, diversity and Engaged Learning by providing a contemporary and accessible education in the arts, sciences, humanities and professions and by conducting research, scholarship and creative activity across these branches of knowledge" (Cleveland State University 2015). However, the roles of an anchor institution also include that of real estate developer, purchaser, employer, workforce development, and service provider (Initiative for a Competitive Inner City 2011). CSU offers many initiatives that seek to respond to these demands concurrently. None more effectively captures this dual obligation of educator and community-builder than the university's "Education Park" model.

The Education Park concept, which has evolved over the past five years, is rooted in CSU's commitment to fulfill its core mission while building a thriving neighborhood in the area surrounding campus, which is known as the Campus District. This is especially critical given that CSU's campus borders a downtown that until recently has struggled to sustain economic viability, abandoned industrial land that is just starting to attract private development, and an economically distressed residential neighborhood that is showing signs of recovery.

Specifically, the Education Park is a place-based model that consists of five entities all within a few blocks of each other:

- 1. Campus International School**, a Cleveland Metropolitan School District school that currently goes to grade 7 and is expanding to K-12, and moving into a new building to be built on CSU land;
- 2. MC<sup>2</sup>STEM High School**, whose classrooms for its 150 juniors and seniors are located in one of CSU's most iconic buildings;
- 3. Arts Campus**, which allows students from the university's Department of Theater and Dance, and Department of Art to hone their skills in three renovated, historic buildings on Playhouse Square, which borders the western edge of campus; and
- 4. Center for Innovation in Medical Professions** building, which opened in summer 2015 with dedicated space for the Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) Cleveland campus.
- 5. Washkewicz College of Engineering** building expansion, which will open in fall 2017 with spaces intended to inspire design innovations in biomedicine, and motion and control technology.

These projects represent a combined investment of more than \$95 million currently and more than \$150 million when completed that has dramatically improved the physical environment



of the community, spurring new housing and commercial development while accelerating the creation of educational opportunities in the area. Partners in this endeavor span public, private, philanthropic, and non-profit sectors, including the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Northeast Ohio Medical University, Cleveland Play House, the Cleveland Foundation, Parker Hannifin Corporation and Key Bank.

Education Park is a product of three guiding principles that CSU has advanced to achieve its obligations as an anchor institution in the heart of the Campus District. The first is to leverage the physical reconstruction of CSU's campus to physically enhance the community and spur investment. Second, CSU leadership has embarked on an aggressive strategy to galvanize organizational partnerships and build institutional networks to achieve high-impact outcomes in an accelerated fashion that the university by itself could not have accomplished. Third is the intentional emphasis on producing high-quality, accessible, educational opportunities tied to regional workforce needs as a catalyst for community-building and shared interest.

## The Five Components of the Education Park

Adherence to these guiding principles has allowed five complex and substantial enterprises to emerge almost simultaneously and in a relative short period of time. While their collective impact has led to the Education Park's overall success, each has made a distinctive influence to the overall effort.

*Campus International School.* The school was the brainchild of CSU President Ronald M. Berkman and former CMSD Chief Executive Officer Eugene Sanders. Established in 2010, it currently runs from kindergarten through 7th grade, with a grade to be added each year until the school is a fully functioning K-12 enterprise. The school is located in two buildings, one on CSU's campus and one adjacent to campus. However, CMSD is planning to build by August 2017 a \$24.2 million K-8 building for Campus International on property leased from the university. The high school, then, will be housed in the other CSU property.

The new building, in particular, has generated much public enthusiasm. The first paragraph in a Sept. 2, 2015 newspaper article in *The Plain Dealer* announcing plans for the new K-8 building declared: "Downtown has a full-service supermarket and now, at long last, it's about to get its first large-scale public school" (Litt 2015). The article notes that the announcement of the school came just a week after the opening of a Heinen's supermarket, part of a family-owned regional chain, in a long-abandoned building downtown. The school, like the grocery store, has been embraced as a symbol of community sustainability. The hope is that Campus International will encourage young professionals who are being attracted to Campus District and the downtown area to stay in the community even after they start families. As CMSD's chief operating officer, Patrick Zohn, was quoted as saying in the *Plain Dealer* article, "It's a way to plant our flag in confidence of the rebirth and growth of downtown Cleveland."

Among the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's 72 elementary schools, Campus International is one of only 13 elementary schools rated as excellent or effective. However, despite the school's prominence, it is not elitist. It is a neighborhood school where students are selected by lottery, not based on a selective test. Two-thirds of the student body is African American, Hispanic or multiracial.



It is the first public school to seek International Baccalaureate accreditation. Students study year-round, and they all learn Mandarin Chinese beginning in kindergarten. Still, the unique curriculum is considered less a reason for the school's extraordinary success than the culture of the school, which is centered on a holistic social, physical, emotional, and cultural experience. CSU faculty and students are deeply engaged with the school. An inventory of Cleveland State's engagement efforts in 2014 found that Campus International School enlisted more engagement from members of the campus than any other CSU initiative. Some 35 faculty members from a variety of disciplines, many outside the College of Education and Human Services, were involved in the school, as well as 191 CSU students. Much of that was due to the organizing work of Ron Abate, an associate professor of teacher education, who serves as CSU's liaison to the school on a full-time basis.

The impact of Campus International is being felt beyond the boundaries of the Education Park. CSU faculty and students are now working to interject aspects of the International Baccalaureate curriculum into the district's lowest achieving schools. The objective is to reinforce the central lesson learned through the partnership throughout the district: All children have the capacity to achieve academic success at a high level if they are embraced by a culture of high expectation and committed institutional support.

*Arts Campus.* In January 2012, the curtain went up on Cleveland State University's Arts Campus at PlayhouseSquare, the largest performing arts theater district west of New York City's Broadway. This collaboration among CSU, PlayhouseSquare and Cleveland Playhouse, a non-profit developer, enables students to hone their skills alongside working arts professionals in 120,000 square feet of studios, rehearsal space, classrooms and offices.

A \$30-million renovation converted the historic Allen Theatre into three versatile performance spaces for CSU's Department of Theatre and Dance. The venue also is home to the university's partnership with GroundWorks DanceTheater. Amid the glittering marquees of PlayhouseSquare, two more facilities have made their mark on the Arts Campus. The Galleries at CSU opened in September 2012 in the historic Cowell & Hubbard Building. The stylish exhibition space showcases work by faculty and other artists of national and international reputation, as well as student shows, community-based exhibitions and related educational programs. Around the corner in the Middough Building, two floors serve as the headquarters for the Arts Campus, complete with classrooms, rehearsal spaces and art studios with views of downtown Cleveland.

While the space is extraordinary, students are mostly impacted by the people who inhabit the space. The Arts Campus provides students with hands-on learning in a public theater environment shared with experienced professionals. Meanwhile, the renovations have served as a catalyst for a far more extensive renovation of Playhouse Square that has fueled downtown's rebirth. In May 2014, a 20-foot-tall outdoor chandelier, erected 24 feet above the street, was turned on as the centerpiece of the district, capping a \$16 million investment in exterior improvements for the Square.

*MC<sup>2</sup>STEM High School.* Students at MC<sup>2</sup>STEM spend their 9th-grade year at the Great Lakes Science Center in downtown Cleveland and then move to the GE Lighting headquarters in suburban East Cleveland for 10th grade. Starting in 2013, thanks largely to a \$1.25 million donation from KeyBank, they began arriving on the CSU campus for their junior and senior years of high school. While most of their time is spent in classrooms at the university's iconic Rhodes Tower, which



houses the CSU library, MC<sup>2</sup>STEM students get to work alongside college students in labs with high-tech equipment, including lasers and robotics.

MC<sup>2</sup>STEM is a year-long school with a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) focus that reinforces project-based instruction using a mastery grading system. Students serve internships throughout their high school experience while being mentored and tutored by knowledgeable professionals and faculty. The school has been recognized by “Edutopia,” the online publication of the George Lucas Educational Foundation, as a “School that Works” for its integrated project-based learning and real-world internship experiences (Vega 2014).

While the school has an unabashed STEM orientation, there is no expectation that all students will go on to pursue college degrees in STEM fields. Debbie K. Jackson, associate professor of teacher education who serves as a Faculty Fellow assigned to coordinating campus involvement at the high school, notes that she engages students with faculty not only in CSU’s Washkewicz College of Engineering and College of Sciences and Health Professions, but also those in the liberal arts, education and urban affairs. The school’s project-based learning ignites students who gravitate toward the humanities and social sciences as well as those who have a more technical preference, she says. It also supports the premise that all students can achieve at a high academic level when learning is made relevant to them. During the 2014-15 academic year, MC<sup>2</sup>Stem was the only Cleveland Metropolitan School District high school that does not admit students based on test scores to receive an “A” grade from the state for its graduation rate.

*Center for Innovation in the Medical Professions.* Healthcare is the largest economic growth sector in Northeast Ohio. Employment in the sector grew 20% from 2000 to 2014 to more than 177,000, rivaling the region’s manufacturing sector in size, while the sector’s gross regional product grew 25%, or \$3 billion, during that time, according to a 2014 quarterly economic review published by to Team NEO, a non-profit, economic development organization focused on creating jobs in Northeast Ohio. Cleveland is a national healthcare hub with more than 60 hospitals, including the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic. Yet despite this amazing array institutions and services, deep inequalities exist in the region in the quality of health among Cleveland’s diverse population. A groundbreaking report by the Cuyahoga County Place Matters Team (2013) found that life expectancy in the Cleveland’s Hough neighborhood – a predominantly African American, economically distressed community – is an astounding 24 years less than the life expectancy of residents in the affluent suburb of Lyndhurst just 8.5 miles away.

CSU’s contribution in addressing these economic and systemic challenges in the health care arena has manifested in the \$47.5 million Center for Innovation in the Medical Professions, the most recent addition of the Education Park complex, which opened in September 2015. The striking building sits at the campus’ busiest intersection of Euclid Avenue and East 22nd Street and along the east-west “Health-Tech Corridor” that runs between downtown and the Cleveland Clinic. It is the home of CSU’s nursing and health sciences programs – including occupational therapy, physical therapy and public health. It also houses the Cleveland campus of NEOMED, providing the first public medical school presence in the City of Cleveland. The building is the headquarters for the NEOMED-CSU Partnership for Urban Health, which seeks to meet growing workforce demands and reduce health disparities in neighborhoods across the city by training a more culturally competent, diverse group of medical professionals. Just prior to its opening, Cleveland State received a \$5.5



million grant from the Cleveland Foundation to support the work of the partnership; the Foundation had previously provided \$1.75 million to fund the initiative.

The Center for Innovation in Medical Professions building is physically designed to foster interdisciplinary learning among professional programs, and collaboration between the campus and the community to reflect the emerging demand for more interactive, culturally relevant approaches to health care delivery. Interdisciplinary team learning occurs in flexible classroom spaces, teaching clinics, and state-of-the-art simulation labs where students interact with each other across disciplines and with community clients. The approach contrasts traditional instruction by health programs, which trains students to function as highly skilled but largely autonomous professionals. Rather, this approach is responsive to disruptions in the health care industry, including health care reform and changing health care needs of diverse populations, which have ushered in more collaborative models of care delivery, care processes, and professional roles.

The facility also fosters a deep engagement with the Cleveland community. The Urban Primary Care Initiative, a project of the CSU-NEOMED Partnership for Urban Health, seeks to recruit and develop future primary care physicians who will practice in underserved Cleveland neighborhoods – starting with young people who grew up in those very communities. In their first two years in the program, which take place at Cleveland State, students are immersed in eight Cleveland neighborhoods. Over the past two years, 14 community-based organizations in those neighborhoods have hosted CSU students in support of community-based participatory research projects. The students continue their work in those neighborhoods as part of their curriculum after they matriculate to NEOMED for medical school, where they log 72 hours during first two years in a community-based urban primary care facility in Cleveland. In addition, Community Champions – volunteers who live or work in the eight neighborhoods – are assigned to the students as mentors. A Community Advisory Board is involved in every aspect of the program, from curriculum development to creating retention strategies. The board's diverse membership includes not only representatives from the major health systems in the region but also ministers and community activists.

The community focus is paying off: Of the 78 students in the program who were enrolled at CSU during the 2015-16 academic year, about one-third (32%) were underrepresented minorities, exceeding CSU's diversity enrollment in other high-demand degree programs on campus. The expectation is that the intense interaction among students, faculty and residents in urban neighborhoods – which emanates from the Center for Innovation in the Medical Professions – will create improved relations between urban residents and professional health providers, while creating a greater sense of empowerment among residents to affect health conditions among their neighbors and family members.

*Washkewicz College of Engineering.* Parker Hannifin, a world leader in motion and control technologies and systems, has partnered with CSU to create design labs and research to bring advanced engineering solutions to challenges in health care, industry and aerospace. In 2012, the company created an Endowed Chair in Human Motion and Control in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and developed the Parker Hannifin Human Motion and Control Laboratory. The cutting-edge research produced through the lab focuses on a combination of experimental data and modeling to identify the control schemes humans use in gait during locomotion. This has led to new innovations in the growing field of powered prosthetic devices.





The partnership will be further expanded through a 100,000 square foot addition to the existing Engineering Building to be built over two phases, with the first to be completed in fall 2017 at a cost of \$46.2 million. The expansion is being funded by Parker Hannifin along with a gift from its CEO and President, Donald Washkewicz, who is a CSU alumnus, and other private and public investment. The new facility will greatly expand the College of Engineering's motion and control laboratory space as well as create simulation labs for 3D modeling and other applications. One exciting addition will be a "makerspace," which is a fabrication lab that invites hands-on experiential learning. It will be available to students from disciplines throughout CSU and, eventually, to public users, including new businesses along the burgeoning Health-Tech Corridor that are focused on biomedical devices and other innovative needs of Cleveland's robust healthcare industry.

Beyond the collaboration between CSU's brand of Engaged Learning and private sector demand, the facility expansion is all the more significant to the community because of its location on the northeastern edge of campus in an area that is a bit off the beaten path and where private development is sputtering to take off. Directly across the street from the site of the new building is market-rate housing that was built within the past four years. While initially priced for growing student market demand, the housing has attracted a significant share of young professionals who work in nearby downtown. It is expected that the College of Engineering's dramatic physical improvements will further spawn such investment north of campus on land that was generally developed for industry, which has largely abandoned the area.

### Three Guiding Principles

Although the elements of CSU's Education Park emerged at different times and under diverse circumstances, they are interconnected by three guiding principles that the university has adhered to in establishing each project. They are: 1) Leverage CSU's physical development on behalf of the community; 2) embrace institutional partnerships and networks to achieve objectives; and 3) generate high-quality, educational opportunities as a catalyst neighborhood transformation.

*Leverage CSU's physical development on behalf of the community.* Over the past decade, CSU has deliberately embraced the city of Cleveland – its institutions and organizations, leaders and activists, assets and challenges – as an essential and valued component of a vibrant learning environment. The renewed focus began under the leadership of Michael Schwartz, Cleveland State's fifth president, who took office in 2002. President Schwartz led a campaign called Building Blocks for the Future, which sought to dramatically transform the university's facilities master plan to refocus campus architecture from a traditional inward orientation—with courtyards insulated from the city—to an outwardly focused alignment that placed building fronts along the city's major corridors. It involved more than \$350 million in new construction and renovations.

The university's Student Center, built in 2010, emerged as the most visible representation of this shift, with its dramatically curving entrance just steps from busy bus stops, essentially defining a new center point of campus. But the building perhaps most symbolic of the change is the Parker Hannifin Administration Center, home to the president's and provost's offices as well as other senior administrators. Rather than being tucked away behind a grassy courtyard, the building sits right on Euclid and is shared by Elements restaurant, which is located directly



below the President's Office. The Provost's Office, on the east side of the building, sits so closely to relatively new student housing next door that students can communicate with the chief academic officer by placing signs in their windows.

When Ronald M. Berkman succeeded Schwartz as president in 2009, he continued this theme of creating physical intimacy between campus and the activity of the city through building renovation and construction. Advancing a theme of Engaged Learning, Berkman has gone beyond exploiting the architectural elements of the buildings to putting greater emphasis on their purpose, choosing to invest in facilities that explicitly heighten the academic focus of the university. The buildings that are part of the Education Park reflect this commitment to using physical space to create a K-16 learning community that aligns with the goal of enhancing learning in a community context.

*Embrace institutional partnerships and networks to achieve objectives.* Berkman has instituted a compulsion for institutional collaboration that is a departure from the university-centric approach that colleges often follow as they seek to move their agendas. Essentially, any new initiative at CSU is expected to start with the question, "Who else is trying to do this?" Rather than assuming that the university will make discoveries that no one has ever envisioned, the query anticipates that, in fact, the idea has already surfaced. Berkman's goal, then, is to find the other innovators and forge an alliance. This necessarily means that CSU does not always get top billing. The CSU logo dispersed throughout the Arts Campus, for instance, is prominent but not nearly as much as the bright lights of Playhouse Square. Likewise, NEOMED's logo is posted at the same scale as CSU's on the new Center for the Medical Professions building. In the case of Parker Hannifin, CSU has become the defacto headquarters for one of its significant research enterprises.

*Generate high-quality, educational opportunities as a catalyst for transformation.* Strong communities have strong schools. And one of the most effective strategies for improving schools and educational opportunities for all students has been university-community partnerships focused on creating new, innovative approaches to improving learning (Harkavy and Hartley 2009, 7). It is no surprise, then, that the centerpieces of the Education Park are the Campus International School and the MC2STEM High School – both diverse, open-access, public schools that disproportionately serve minority, low-income students. The other three pieces of the Education Park – the Arts Campus in collaboration with Playhouse Square; the Center for Innovation in Medical Professions, which houses the Partnership for Urban Health with NEOMED; and the learning labs that will be part of the new College of Engineering expansion – all demonstrate new forms of experiential and interdisciplinary learning in a context that benefits a larger group of community members than just the students.

## The Reward of Community Impact

In December 2015, President Berkman was awarded the Visionary Award by Campus District, Inc., a non-profit community development corporation responsible for fostering development in the 500-acre area surrounding CSU, which includes two other anchor institutions: Cuyahoga Community College's Metropolitan Campus and St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. In presenting the award, Campus District's leaders noted the following: "The benefit of the Education Park to the Campus District and Playhouse Square is the creation of a vibrant, livable neighborhood that is spurring private market housing and commercial investment." In 2014, the Downtown Cleveland Alliance presented President Berkman with its Ruth Ratner Miller Award in recognition of CSU's



efforts to advance and enhance downtown Cleveland. Both awards recognized that since 2007, five of the 18 residential developments constructed in the entire downtown area have been in Campus District, contributing to a revitalized downtown whose occupancy rate hovers around 98 percent, according to the Downtown Cleveland Alliance (2015). The success was recognized by Forbes, which dubbed downtown Cleveland as one of the nation's 15 fastest growing central business districts (Brennan 2013).

It is no coincidence that the renaissance of downtown and Campus District, and the prominence of Cleveland State have risen simultaneously. While the university has made great strides in terms of student retention and graduation rates, research production, and financial stability, its public credibility has come from the evidence that its institutional progress has directly contributed to tangible, community improvement. CSU's Education Park has proven to be the manifestation of this fusion between institutional success and community impact.

## Conclusion

Higher education is facing challenging times. The business model is failing as administrators come to the stark realization that neither predictable hikes in tuition nor increases in state subsidies is a dependable source of revenue. Institutions in the Midwest and Northeast, where populations are declining, face the added challenge of competing for students from a shrinking demographic pool. New forms of technology-based learning continue to outpace most institutions' ability or willingness to adapt. And the very value proposition of a college degree as a reliable path to financial security is under assault.

In all these circumstances, universities that establish themselves as effective anchor institutions that are deeply engaged in their surrounding communities put themselves in the best position to endure. Young people increasingly are indicating that they want to live, work and learn in urban areas where they have a chance to address real social issues and make a living. Anchor universities have a solid case that they bring real public benefit, and they are positioned to tap into the innovation and investment available in vibrant metropolitan areas. The experiences at Cleveland State suggest that to take full advantage of this role requires three essential considerations.

First, institutions must rely heavily on partnerships and collaboration. This is especially true given the constraints on resources and the complexity of the challenges most communities face. Second, every investment of capacity and resources in some fashion must contribute to increasing student success. There may be no single contribution anchor institutions in higher education can make then to dramatically improve the retention and graduation rates of their students, particularly if they attract a disproportionate number of students who generally are underrepresented in higher education. Finally, serious attention must be paid to matters of inclusion and equity. It is quite possible to make a meaningful economic contribution to the region overall and fail to significantly move the needle of progress on residential pockets near campus that have suffered the greatest economic distress unless there is intentional focus.

Cleveland State's Education Park model and the community that encompasses it have prospered and continue to be shaped as CSU follows these lessons.





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