



# Sharing Resources and Infrastructure with the Community

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## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Project Challenge:

The associate vice chancellor for finance at a public research institution on the west coast approached the Council with the following questions:

- Are other universities sharing administrative services with the surrounding community?
- What services are shared, and how is this managed logistically?
- What cost savings are realized and/or what revenue is generated as a result of the shared services model?

### Project Context:

In light of the current economy, universities are increasingly seeking innovative ways to generate revenue and save on costs. A logical and a practical solution to this is to engage in creative partnerships with the surrounding community, developing mutually beneficial relationships. Partnering with the community offers universities an opportunity to capitalize on pre-existing strengths and established infrastructures. For instance, universities may contribute to capital improvement projects that benefit both partners; schools may also be able to leverage in-house expertise or previously existing infrastructure to provide services to the community (e.g., copy services). These relationships are an opportunity for significant cost-savings in troubled economic times, with the added benefit of improving town-gown relations.

### Project Sources:

- ❖ Advisory Board's internal and online ([www.educationadvisoryboard.com](http://www.educationadvisoryboard.com)) research libraries
- ❖ The Chronicle of Higher Education <http://chronicle.com>
- ❖ National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) <http://nces.ed.gov/>

### Research Parameters:

- ❖ The Council conducted a comprehensive literary search to identify resource-sharing partnerships between universities and the surrounding community. Although such relationships exist at the universities profiled, these relationships do not necessarily entail administrative job sharing between the university and its city partner.

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A Guide to Universities Profiled in this Brief			
University	Location	Enrollment (Total / Undergraduate)	Classification
University A	Midwest: Large City	9,844 / 4,207	Private: Research University (very high research activity)
University C	Midwest: Midsize City	41,042 / 26,083	Public: Research University (very high research activity)

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

### Key Observations

**Most universities do not engage in administrative job sharing with the local community.** However, the Council has come across relationships in which the university will pay a specified sum to use a particular service that has been established by the city (e.g., parking enforcement and processing); in some instances, separate university and city entities will partner for specific endeavors (e.g., city police supports university police during special events on campus).

**Many institutions indicate an interest in partnering with the community to share resources given current economic conditions and the desire to reduce costs.**

**When universities do share resources with the community, it is considered more of a “value-add” than a cost-savings measure.** Collaboration with city partners in areas as diverse as police services, library facilities, and parking structures can enable universities to improve services that they might not have the resources to offer independently.

**In addition to monetary advantages, sharing resources with city partners is an excellent way to improve town-gown relations.** All contacts cited improved relations with the surrounding community as one of the key advantages of creating shared services partnerships.

**Generally, logistical management of shared services remains in the hands of one party while the service in question is available to both partners.** Only one university identified by the Council in the course of research, University B, has partnered with the city to share administrative management of the shared service; in all other instances, resource sharing occurs either in an arrangement where the particular resource is “owned” by one party and “outsourced” to the other, or through mutual collaboration in a specific service (e.g., police activities).

### III. NETWORKING CONTACTS

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#### University A: *OneCommunity*

Fiber optics infrastructure; Wi-Fi and ultra-broadband networking

- A city-wide initiative from the mayor's office to promote high-tech economic development was unable to get off the ground in 2001 because of a lack of infrastructure
- In 2002, the CIO at University A connected with leaders in the surrounding community, obtaining buy-in for an IT network infrastructure project and contracting the project out to private companies
- In August 2004, University A officially launched its ultra-broadband network; within 6 months, the city and 17 other organizations (including hospitals, government agencies, and non-profits) had subscribed
- Since 2003, OneCommunity has been an incorporated non-profit organization but is still guided by University A's CIO and his partner, a technological entrepreneur
- At present, OneCommunity is still reliant on funding from gifts, grants, and contributions; the eventual goal is self-sufficiency from service revenues and other business income

In 2002, University A's recently hired CIO met with leaders in the city. With buy-in from local leaders, the university issued a \$27 million RFP to build an ultra-broadband network and Wi-Fi infrastructure for the university campus and surrounding area. Cisco Systems won the contract and constructed the network infrastructure, launching the network in 2004 with University A as the first subscriber. In the following months, the city and various other governmental and non-profit institutions (e.g., a hospital and healthcare network, a local community college) also subscribed to the network.

A large factor in OneCommunity's success has been the buy-in from both city partners and private enterprise. University A's CIO obtained the partnership of a well-known local technological entrepreneur, thereby acquiring the support of a local technology coalition. The backing of this industry-supported group, in turn, gave the OneCommunity project additional momentum and social capital.

In addition to the network that now provides ultra-broadband and WiFi access to much of the city, OneCommunity now helps to coordinate access for network connectivity in diverse ways. When another university in the vicinity wanted to create a campus Wi-Fi network, for example, OneCommunity partnered with that university, facilitating a connection between it and its city partner. OneCommunity assisted the city and university in raising the necessary funds and also donated the use of its fiber optic network. This collaboration cost the city only forty percent of what it would have cost to create independent of OneCommunity.

### III. NETWORKING CONTACTS

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#### University B: *King Library*

##### University and city public library

- Because of deteriorating town-gown relations, University B and the mayor of the city had been seeking a way to collaborate for some time when the idea of a joint library was settled upon in 1997
  - Both the city and the university needed new, technologically updated library facilities; neither entity could afford the project independently
  - The King Library, completed in 2003, houses 1.4 million books and offers access to 300 databases; it is open to the public daily until 10 p.m., with special student-only quiet study hours from 10 p.m. – 12 a.m.
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- The university library dean and the city library director oversee a combined management team that meets regularly; very occasional oversight is also provided by a city-university advisory board (including the university president, vice president for finance and administration, the city manager, and a budget liaison), as well as university- and city-specific independent advisory boards
  - King Library is technically university property, but the city shares costs for security, facilities maintenance, and cleaning; the operating agreement dictates the amounts paid by the city and the library
  - The operating agreement also includes specific staffing requirements for university and city library staff, who work in tandem and often perform similar job functions but operate within discrete reporting and salary structures
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- The project cost was \$177.5 million, funded by the state, the city redevelopment authority, University B, and donations from private fundraising
  - Contacts describe the library as a “value-add” rather than a cost-savings, since neither the university nor the city could have afforded the library facilities otherwise
  - Costs savings were realized in consolidating the resources from the previously existing libraries, as the university and city were each able to unsubscribe to some journals and newspapers that the other entity already held

In the planning stages of the project, the library received considerable pushback from faculty and students, who were concerned about availability of resources, as well as from some contingents within the city. Six years into the project, however, feedback is very positive from all quarters, and contacts note that King Library “feels like a university library.” Its resources are all open to the public, though the university and city each technically maintain ownership of their respective materials.

The library is staffed by independently supervised city and university staff, who often serve in identical capacities (e.g., both city and university librarians may be staffing the circulation desk at any given time). Initially, there was some tension around differing pay structures and holiday schedules; however, this has lessened over time.

### III. NETWORKING CONTACTS

#### University C: *Police, Fire, and Transit*

Police support	Fire protection	Transit system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ University C police assist outside law enforcement in matters that require specially trained university police (e.g., hazardous material spills), while city police provide additional security for university events (e.g., football games)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City firefighters operate rent- and utility-free out of a fire station owned and maintained by the university</li> <li>▪ University of C Fire Marshall and fire safety inspectors liaise with the city fire department, coordinating fire prevention and safety programs on campus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The university bus system and the city transit system offer joint park-and-ride facilities for both constituencies</li> <li>▪ Contacts note that there are “some prospects down the road...for either a joint- or single-maintenance” transit system</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No administrative sharing, despite close collaboration on specific initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Although the building is owned by the university, fire services are administered entirely by the city</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The university and city administer their transit systems separately but maintain joint park-and-ride lots</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rather than cost savings, collaboration between university and city police allows for increased efficiency in police operations by distributing staff according to areas of expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Benefit to university: Closer proximity to fire services</li> <li>▪ Benefit to city: Fire department is not charged property tax because it operates on university property; city fire services receive additional state funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ University C contributes funds to the city transportation authority, which helps garner additional federal revenues because of increased ridership</li> <li>▪ University staff, faculty, and students can ride for free on either university or city transit</li> </ul>

### III. NETWORKING CONTACTS

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#### University of C, cont'd.: *Capital Improvement*

##### Capital improvement and parking

- In 2000, the university's existing parking structures were at full capacity; therefore, following successful partnerships with the city in street-widening, storm sewer, and commuter parking projects, the university and the city joined forces to build and maintain a city-run parking structure on city property near the university campus
  - The city agreed to add additional floors to the structure and allow university affiliates to park there; in return, the university contributed \$5,751,000 as a 20-year funding partner
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- The city oversees all maintenance and management of the joint parking structure
  - Additionally, the city manages parking enforcement and citation processing at the joint structure; contacts add that the enforcement function at all university parking structures is outsourced to the city because it is more cost-effective
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- The parking facility near campus is owned by the city but operates with some university funds; the university saved cost by gaining additional parking without having to fund the construction of an entirely new parking structure
  - The university has also paid for a share of city repaving of streets adjacent to university property, as well as collaborating with the city to assist in sidewalk and street improvements in the downtown area

While University C and the city are currently engaged in resource-sharing and collaboration rather than shared administration, contacts note that conversations are underway to set up a joint relationship for purchasing of renewable energy sources.

#### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES NOTE

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