

**Conference “The University and the City. An Agenda for the New Century”
September 9-10-11, 2015**

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

1) (PHOTO: PHILADELPHIA) as many of you know, Virtually every large city in America is home to a major university. But not every American university is at home in the city.

2) (PHOTO: SWARTHMORE COLLEGE) I would go even further and say this: American universities are not really urban institutions. Of course, we have many universities that are virtually synonymous with cities: Penn, Temple and Drexel in Philadelphia; Columbia and NYU in Manhattan; MIT and Harvard in Cambridge; Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. All are located within an easy walk or subway ride of the downtown business district. All are situated in dense neighborhoods. But proximity is one thing and culture is another. For the last century, virtually every urban university in America has sought to isolate itself from the city that hosts it.

From their earliest days, America’s universities have followed a different path from those in other parts of the world. The majority of American schools are private. And most are located in suburban or rural areas. In the American imagination, the quintessential university is a collection of gracious historic buildings – preferably Early American or Gothic in style - arranged around a verdant campus green. (PHOTO: PENN QUAD) Such campuses come naturally in rural settings. But they are much harder to achieve in the dense environment of a city, where land is precious and expensive. Nevertheless, all our major urban universities have tried to replicate this country ideal. In doing so, they have systematically walled themselves off from the city that surrounds them.

3) (PHOTO, LOADING DOCK of WISTAR INSTITUTE, ACROSS FROM PENN QUAD) Of course, these institutions don’t literally build walls. What they do is establish clear perimeters and spheres of influence. At the University of Chicago, this takes the form of a wide highway, which separates the school from the largely African American neighborhood on its border. For years, Penn has defined the edges of its campus by arranging its buildings so their back walls faced Philadelphia’s main streets, loading docks and all. Here in this photo you can see Penn’s brand new Wistar Institute, which does bio-medical research. It sits on a major Philadelphia street and faces the historic quad I showed you a moment ago, yet it presents an unsightly loading dock and long blank wall to the city. This kind of architecture is used to create a cloistered campus that looks much different than the city. Inside, Penn’s campus is lush and beautifully landscaped, and peopled by a highly affluent population. But once you step outside the boundaries, into the city, you enter a world that is denser, more congested and markedly poorer. We even have a shorthand to distinguish these two worlds: town and gown. (PHOTO: LANDSCAPED CAMPUS INTERIOR)

Penn is much nicer on the inside, isn’t it? This sharp demarcation, an architectural cordon sanitaire if you will, is terrible, not just for cities, but for academic life. Fortunately, over the last decade, some urban universities have begun to reassess policies that isolate them from their host cities. Despite the poor example of the Wistar Institute, Penn has been a leader in opening up its campus. But changing the cultural mindset that produces such cloistered campuses has not been easy. The

town/gown separation remains a source of deep tension that reinforces the inequality in American society. (PHOTO: PEOPLE IN GOWNS)

4) It is perhaps worth noting that I am the only member of this panel who is not employed by an academic institution – maybe the only one speaking at this conference. I'd like to think that being an outsider gives me a special perspective on the relationship between universities and cities.

(PHOTO: NEW HOUSING) As the architecture critic for the Philadelphia Inquirer, I am deeply interested in how buildings and public spaces shape the way we live. So I will speak mainly about the physical impact of the university on the city. This happens to be a very exciting time for American cities. After many decades of decline, when cities were losing population, our urban centers are being rediscovered by the middle class. Most large American cities have seen significant population increases in the last census. Philadelphia has gained almost 80,000 new residents in the last decade.

As a result, blighted neighborhoods are being reborn, gentrified. Vast amounts of new housing is being built right now, almost entirely by private developers. New parks, amenities and museums are being created to serve this affluent new population.

(PHOTO:BROAD ST BEER GARDEN) Several demographic and cultural trends have come together to spark this urban revival. You can trace its beginning to the shift in the way cities were depicted on American television. After decades of gritty crime shows, showing cities as terrifying concrete jungles, we began to see a different portrayal in the 1990s in shows like Sex and the City, Friends, Seinfeld. They showed cities as fun, creative places for smart young, ambitious people. Much of the recent population growth has been fueled by millennials, who were born long after the civil rights conflicts of the '60s and '70s and grew up with more inclusive attitudes about race. In Philadelphia, the fastest growing group is people between the ages of 18 and 35.

-Raised in the suburbs, this generation is drawn to cities because of their tolerance and diversity. They particularly crave the authenticity of places built over time, places with a past, and designed to encourage social interaction.

The renewed interest in urban life has also been helped by sharp reductions in crime over the last decade. Parents who may have once been afraid to let their children attend urban universities are now quite comfortable with the idea.

5) (PHOTO CHART) still, those millennials would not be flocking into cities if it had not been for meds and eds - shorthand for medical and educational institutions. Education and medicine play an outsize role in the US economy, and universities and hospitals are now the biggest employers in many cities.

-Universities account almost 10 percent of the private sector jobs in Philadelphia. Out of the 15 top employers in the city, five are universities. Penn is Philadelphia's largest private employer. Even New York City, which has a more diversified economy than Philadelphia, and where the financial

industry is king, two of the city's top ten employers are universities, NYU and Columbia. Because they are constantly expanding, these universities have an insatiable appetite for land.

As universities have become crucial to urban economies, they have gained enormous influence over city policy. It's not surprising that urban universities are now using their influence to shape their urban environment to their advantage.

6) This cuts both ways. Cities have benefitted from jobs and investment and new construction that emerge from urban universities. But America's urban universities have also benefitted from the revival of cities.

And not just the top schools like Penn and Columbia. Because so many young people want to live in cities, mid-tier schools like Drexel and Temple in Philadelphia, Northwestern in Chicago and Fordham in New York, applications are way up. So many young people now want to go to college in a city environment that urban universities can have their pick of the brightest students.

(PHOTO DREXEL DORM CONSTRUCTION) That, in turn, has helped them to raise billions in private donations and pay for a boom in academic construction not seen since the post-war era. In Philadelphia, Penn, Drexel and Temple have each gone on a major real estate binge, spending a billion dollars each – each - over the last decade on new classrooms, dorms and improved campus landscaping. The same has happened in cities across the country.

7) Before I talk about how that spending is altering the relationship between the university and cities, I want to take a moment to put the current situation in a historical context. I particularly want to show how the need for land defines universities' relationship with their host city.

(PHOTO:UVA) As I mentioned, the earliest American universities were located in remote, rural areas. When Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia in 1819, it was intentionally sited in the open countryside 185 kilometers from Washington DC, Jefferson distrusted cities and he did not want its students' minds corrupted by urban ideas and vices. No drinking in cafes.

At the same time, he was also a true Renaissance man who was an accomplished architect deeply influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. He envisioned the University of Virginia as an "academical village," whose god would be science. A trained architect, schooled in classical forms, he personally planned and designed the campus. The university was laid out around a large green, much like a rural village, with a library situated at the focal point. Jefferson's verdant college campus has been the defining image of what an American university should be ever since.

8) (PHOTO: OLD PENN) Contrast that with what his contemporary, Benjamin Franklin, envisioned when he founded what would become the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, in 1759. Opened a half century before the University of Virginia, it was located in the bustling heart of Philadelphia, then the largest city in America.

This photo shows the Penn's medical college, built in 1829. Seems pretty nice. The photo it was taken in 1872, the year that Penn decided to flee central Philadelphia. Penn's downtown campus was only nine blocks from the city's churning waterfront, an area had become dense with commerce, small factories, and immigrant housing. Penn was appalled by the growing congestion. One commenter of the period dismissed the area with these words: "a vile neighborhood that was growing viler every day."

-when Penn made the decision to leave the center, it defected to a relatively green fields of West Philadelphia. The university had convinced the government of Philadelphia to sell it a large tract on the edge of downtown - a site that belonged to the city's almshouse and charity hospital. There it began laying the foundation for a campus on the model of the University of Virginia. It was the first step in an effort to disengage from the city and retreat into the Ivory Tower.

9) (PHOTO: COLLEGE HALL) Penn started by building a gracious college hall in place of the almshouse. The building was sited much like a country villa, surrounded by green lawns. No fences or sign posts announced the entrance. At this point, the idea of demarcating the urban campus within the city still had not taken hold. There were no gates as there were at Harvard (PHOTO)

Ironically, the bustling city caught up with Penn once again, and it became harder to maintain its green campus environment. By the 1930s, the area around Penn's new campus had become built up with housing and businesses. Noisy Trolleys rattled by its classrooms. Writings from the time are full of complaints Students said it was impossible to hear lectures because of the rattle of the trolleys. University officials worried about the proliferation of cheap shops and cheap hotels just a block from the prestigious school.

(PHOTO, TROLLY) Dismayed that it had been surrounded by the vile city once again, Penn weighed the possibility of leaving Philadelphia altogether and moving to the country. A wealthy trustee even offered the school a large tract of land in a far western county that was still intensely rural. But because Penn's economic value to Philadelphia was so important, the city officials begged the school not to leave.

Eventually penn agreed to stay, but That didn't mean it was willing to give up the idea of fitting the campus model into its urban surroundings. Instead it began to look for ways to increase the size of its campus.

10) The conclusion of World War II opened the way for Penn to realize it's expansionist dreams. As part of the Cold War building boom, the US government began investing heavily in rebuilding America's aging cities. These programs, commonly known as urban renewal, helped Penn realize the countrified, Jeffersonian campus it always wanted.

The ostensible goal of urban renewal was to get rid of old, substandard, blighted houses, and replace them with modern buildings, mostly highrises. At the same time the federal government was also beginning to channel large sums to major research institutions like Penn as part of its Cold

War effort to beef up the sciences. The very first digital computer was developed Penn thanks to such funding- eniac. (PHOTO COMPUTER)

(PHOTO: URBAN RENEWAL) The urban renewal programs and the research initiatives poured enormous amounts of money into America's cities, precipitating a major campus building boom. They also put enormous pressure on cities. To accommodate all the new students and new research labs, classrooms, dormitories, libraries and athletic facilities, universities needed land. Urban renewal provided it. It also solved a second problem: In the name of blight removal and reconstruction, government-funded slum clearance programs encouraged universities like Penn to erase the poor and congested poor neighborhoods on its borders.

Virtually every urban university in America, began using federal urban renewal money to buy up blocks of the city and evict their residents and business. These were huge tracts, extending for blocks in every direction. The photo here shows a part of Philadelphia that was cleared by Penn and Drexel, which are located side-by-side. An entire Italian American neighborhood was leveled in the area west of Penn during the 1960s. More than 3,000 mostly African American residents were displaced to the north.

11) None of this would have happened without the wholehearted support of the city.

As recounted in a new book by John Puckett and Mark Frazier Lloyd, called *Becoming Penn*. (PHOTO BOOK COVER), Penn's role as a job creator became increasingly important to Philadelphia. As a result, the city began a tradition of appointing influential Penn officials to chair the city planning commission. Having such a powerful role in city government enabled Penn to translate the goals of the university into city policy. One of the first things that the Penn-led city planning commission did was to develop a strategy to bury noisy trolley lines that rolled through its campus. Of course, underground transit is a major benefit to the city. But it's interesting to note that the trolley and subway lines were buried only on the Penn campus. Once The trains had passed back into the city proper, they re-emerged to run at street level.

At the same time, Urban universities were also developing enormous political influence in state capitals. By the 1970s, the state of Pennsylvania was becoming the major source of funding for new buildings at Penn, Drexel and Temple – all private universities. As older street-friendly urban buildings were demolished with federal urban renewal funds, they were typically replaced by modernist buildings. These were structures that turned their backs on the city and instead faced the new green campuses. By the end of the 70s, Penn's campus sprawled across four city blocks and included a network of tree-shaded pedestrian pathways. The Jeffersonian dream of the verdant cloistered campus has been realized almost entirely with public funds and government support.

The creation of the Penn campus left deep scars on Philadelphia, both physical and psychological. The trauma caused by the destruction still informs the community's view of Penn to this day. Those neighborhoods that survived remain deeply mistrustful of the university's motives. What made the situation even worse was that much of the land that Penn and Drexel acquired sat empty for decades, and was used as surface parking lots. Only now, 50 years later, has Penn begun to build on the last pieces of land remaining from the urban renewal period.

12) (PHOTO: EXPANSION MAP) This is a map of Penn's domains today. By the 1990s, Penn was virtually a private city within the city. The details differ, but the result was much the same for other urban universities – NYU, my alma mater, the University of Chicago. One result of creating these islands of privilege within the decaying city was that the impoverished neighborhoods around the schools became increasingly desperate and dangerous.

Penn was probably the first to recognize the problem after one of its students was murdered in a grocery store just outside the campus boundaries in the 1990s. Under the administration of president Judith Rodin, a native Philadelphian, the university began to re-assess its expansionist practices. She understood that the university needed to open up the campus and re-engage the city. Initially, architecture became a means to express this rapprochement with the city.

13) Together with Vice President John Fry, who is today president of Drexel, Rodin adopted a multi-prong strategy. The first thing they did was to literally turn around Penn's buildings so that once again entrances face outward onto city streets, and not just onto the campus green. Retrofitting existing buildings cost millions of dollars, but it began to make the campus more porous.

(PHOTO: BOOKSTORE) The university also began to build what we call mixed-use buildings on the edge of its campus, on sites acquired back in the 60s through urban renewal. Unlike the first generation of urban renewal structures, these are organized like traditional urban buildings, with shops on the ground floor, and a mix of uses above. The goal was draw pedestrians to the area around the campus, and make it more lively and therefore safer. Of course, much of the retail was aimed at students, but it was a significant improvement over the blank, fortress-like walls of the past. In another effort to combat crime and improve their surroundings, Penn and Drexel set up a non-profit group focused on street-cleaning, safety patrols and public space improvements. It essentially allowed them to operate a private police force on the border of their campus. Together, these measures have transformed the area outside the campus.

14) (PHOTO HOUSES) More controversial has been the university's efforts to re-populate the residential neighborhood with middle-class families.

As part of the effort to make the area around campus safer, Penn began offering its employees low-cost loans to purchase houses. To encourage them further, Penn also supported the construction of a high quality public school. The transformation has been dramatic – and it has been widely copied by urban universities around the country. Over the last decade, hundreds of Penn employees have purchased late 19th Century and early 20th Century homes. Many homes had been poorly maintained student rentals. But others were also occupied by low-income black families. Today they are beautifully restored, single-family homes. House prices have probably doubled. What was once a poor blighted area has now gentrified into one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Philadelphia. The question is, who is the beneficiary of these measures.

15) Without a doubt, the relationship between the university and the neighborhood has improved. But that is partly a result of the demographic changes to the neighborhood. When Penn opened its state-of-the art elementary school in 2002, its student body was 60 percent African

American. Today it's down to about 40 percent, a result of the neighborhood becoming more white and more affluent. Because it is a university area, it is actually quite diverse, with melting pot of nationalities. But those residents are more universally middle class.

Perhaps this demographic shift would have happened in any case because the neighborhood is quite convenient to Philadelphia's center, and the housing stock is excellent. But Penn has clearly benefitted, becoming a more attractive, more desirable school.

Penn has tended to portray its policies as a form of repentance, a way of making up for the damage done to the city during the urban renewal period. It is increasingly clear, however, that the housing subsidies and investments have served its own interests, too. Indeed, you can even see the individual house purchases as a privately funded form of urban renewal. The mistrust in the community has not gone away.

16) Penn's apgrowing economic power is also controversial because it pays no taxes to the Philadelphia government because it is a non profit. As an extremely wealthy institution, Penn has had enormous resources to socially engineer its physical environment. While the elementary school it created is among the top performers in Philadelphia, the city's other public schools remain grossly underfunded. For all its success, Philadelphia still has enormously high rate of poverty, 25 percent, the highest of any big city in the country.

(PHOTO, DREXEL INNOVATION) this isn't happening only in Philadelphia. In all cities, we see that American universities are becoming increasingly focused on real estate development as a way to support their teaching mission. They are developers, planners and landlords for the city. Take Drexel University, now run by Penn's former vice president. Under his leadership, the university has presided over a private master plan to remake the area between Drexel and Philadelphia's main train station into an "innovation district" akin to the Porta Nuova development in Milan. The project, which will cost billions, will certainly raise the university's prestige and create jobs. Bbut we can't ignore that it will further alter the relationship of the university and the city.

American Universities, in essence, have become the equivalent of business conglomerates. These conglomerates are essential to America economic succes. They generate huge numbe of jobs. They are incubators for innovation. They are a major U.S. export if you consider how many foreign student pay full price to attend American universities. But as important as they are, we can't forget they have their own interests. In order to stay competitive, and attract the best faculty, they need to constantly upgrade their facilities. They are always building, always expanding their holdings. For American universities, The city exists as the setting for their ever growing aspirations. We hope that will give the city as much in return.