

From the Desk of the Chancellor, June 14, 2010

We need to behave like the “anchor institution” we are.

What do I mean by that? A recent report from [CEOs for Cities](#) notes that as manufacturers and corporate headquarters downsize or move away, city leaders have begun to pay greater attention to the institutions that now exert the greatest influence—as employers, developers, purchasers, and sources of creativity and innovation. The new “anchor institutions” in our nation’s cities now are likely to be institutions of higher learning: colleges, universities, hospitals, and arts organizations. We are anchored by place. We are highly motivated to invest in where we are now. As such, we can be forces for change, not only improving our own prospects but also our neighborhoods and communities in a sustained way.


The label “anchor institution” was developed in 2002 by Harvard Professor Michael Porter, a leading economic development thinker. Here are some things he recommends that college and university leaders do to advance our role as anchor institutions along with examples of what we at IUPUI are doing toward that end:

- **Improve local and regional quality of life.** IUPUI’s institutional [mission statement](#) makes it clear that this is our raison d’être. We do this in many ways, not least of which is our focus on health and life sciences research and education.
- **Serve on the boards of associations, community organizations, and public sector bodies.** IUPUI has many faculty, staff, deans, and other senior administrators involved at every level in civic activities. We track this as a performance indicator as part of our [institutional portfolio](#).
- **Form a university-liaison office.** We addressed this, in part, by establishing the [IUPUI Solution Center](#) as the new “front door to the campus” in 2004.
- **Commercialize research.** A [report](#) released last month highlighted four Indianapolis-based startup companies that receive business support through the IU Research & Technology Corporation—including CS-Keys, a biotechnology company focused on the discovery and development of cancer biomarkers—because they demonstrate the link between federally-funded basic research and economic growth.
- **Bring together resources from government, the private sector, and local nonprofit organizations.** Our long-standing multifaceted partnership with [George Washington Community School](#) is one of many examples of IUPUI’s efforts as is the recent [Talent Alliance](#) initiative we helped launch.
- **Become critical partners in developing real estate.** IUPUI has been a partner in fostering constructive development efforts along all our borders—White River State Park, NCAA, Indiana Avenue, Head of the Canal, Campus Apartments on the Riverwalk, and more.
- Turn the campus “inside out,” putting retail and more public uses on the edges. This is a key part of the new campus [master plan](#). Instead of lining the edges of campus with parking lots that separate us from surrounding neighborhoods, we will build so that bookstores, restaurants, art galleries, and other businesses draw people in.

A study by the Indiana Business Research Center found that the direct and ripple effects of IUPUI’s presence in Indianapolis account for \$2.5 billion of central Indiana’s economic activity, and the impact of university research accounts for some 13,000 jobs in the region (in addition to the more than 7,500



Chancellor Charles R. Bantz

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faculty and staff directly employed by the campus).

Although we are doing a lot, I would urge that we embrace the label of “anchor institution” and be more intentional about playing that role to greatest benefit for Indianapolis.

Comments? Write chancellor@iupui.edu .
