BOLD LEADERSHIP, REAL REFORM 2.0

Improving **Efficiency**, Cutting **Costs**, and Expanding **College Opportunity**

American Council of Trustees and Alumni
Institute for Effective Governance

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ACTA is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. Founded in 1995, ACTA is the only national organization dedicated to working with alumni, donors, trustees, and education leaders across the United States to support liberal arts education, uphold high academic standards, safeguard the free exchange of ideas on campus, and ensure that the next generation receives an intellectually rich, high-quality education at an affordable price. Our network consists of alumni and trustees from nearly 1,300 colleges and universities, including over 22,000 current board members. Our quarterly newsletter, *Inside Academe*, reaches more than 13,000 readers.

ACTA's Institute for Effective Governance (IEG), founded in 2003 by college and university trustees for trustees, is devoted to enhancing boards' effectiveness and helping trustees fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities fully and effectively. IEG offers a range of services tailored to the specific needs of individual boards and focuses on academic quality, academic freedom, and accountability.

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A growing chorus of voices is emphasizing that bold, dynamic innovation is a must if America's higher education system is to remain the most robust in the world—and certain higher education leaders are emerging to show how it can be done.

Preface

After the Great Recession nearly a decade ago wreaked havoc on global markets and forced entire industries to reevaluate their operations in an uncertain economic landscape, one sector maintained the appearance of being startlingly static: Higher education. "The financial meltdown that has caused seismic upheavals in many other corners of the economy hasn't changed much about how colleges operate," began an October 2009 article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Some institutions were forced to shutter classes and freeze hiring due to financial pressures, but, by and large, the higher education industry seemed oblivious to any need for innovation or restructuring on a larger scale. "It's not a paradigm shift," the president of one prestigious liberal arts college emphasized, when describing a 10% reduction in administrative staff it had recently undertaken, rather calling it "an adjustment to the cost structure" in response to a loss of endowment value.[1]

But a paradigm shift is necessary. Forward thinkers have long recognized its need, and, today, a growing chorus of voices is emphasizing that bold, dynamic innovation is a must if America's higher education system is to remain the most robust in the world— and certain higher education leaders are emerging to show how it can be done. Not long after Harvard Business School professor and *The Innovative University* author Clayton Christensen predicted that half of U.S. colleges and universities could go bankrupt within the next 15 years, Moody's Investor Service forecasted that declining revenues would cause the number of small colleges that would close to triple and the number of mergers to double.[2] As the 22 national higher education leaders who signed the statement *Governance for a New Era: A Blueprint for Higher Education Trustees* recognized: "Emerging content delivery models make bricks and mortar seem a thing of the past. Most experts agree: The future of higher education as an element of America's global

 leadership, along with the very existence of many institutions, is in jeopardy."[3]

We produced this guide because the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) believes that bold thinking and bold action from trustees and academic leaders are needed to ensure that the next generation has access to a high-quality, affordable college education. In this guide, we revisit the universities ACTA featured in our 2015 report *Bold Leadership, Real Reform: Best Practices in University Governance* to follow up on their successes, and we identify a number of additional institutions that have spearheaded effective initiatives, some time-tested and some new, to protect academic excellence, academic freedom, and accountability in higher education. We hope that these case studies will elicit serious discussion at higher education board meetings and more widely among faculty, administrators, and policymakers.

Dr. Michael Poliakoff
President

BOLD LEADERSHIP, REAL REFORM 2.0

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Introduction

A growing number of Americans recognize that our higher education system is in a deepening crisis. Leaders of one third of the country's colleges and universities say that "American higher education is headed in the wrong direction."[4] Costs continue to rise, total college debt has ballooned, and the number of university administrators continues to increase.[5] Meanwhile, skepticism about the value of a college degree grows. The number of hours students spend studying continues to fall, and schools' commitment to intellectual diversity and to academic rigor wavers.[6] It is no wonder that 89% of the public believes that colleges and universities must change if they are to serve the needs of today's students.[7]

The challenges are both real and daunting. The good news is that, while stories about rising tuition and campus unrest dominate the headlines, innovative and engaged trustees, administrators, and policymakers are implementing a wide variety of strategies designed to improve efficiency, accountability, educational quality, and completion rates. These individuals and institutions are working at ground level at America's colleges and universities to move higher education in the right direction.

In early 2015, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) published *Bold Leadership, Real Reform: Best Practices in University Governance*.[8] This innovative trustee guide described over a dozen exciting initiatives at a broad range of schools all across the

country. It is our hope that these programs and their successes can provide a model and an inspiration for higher education leaders who seek to improve institutional quality and hold down costs.

In this guide, we follow up with some of the most promising initiatives profiled in *Bold Leadership*—many of which have branched out or entered exciting new phases. We also provide fresh examples of universities that are engaging in best practices through case studies of Purdue University, the University of Colorado, and Arizona State University. The efforts made by these schools illustrate how trustees, administrators, and other stakeholders can build upon past successes and reinforce hard-won achievements.

The fiduciary duty of a board of trustees includes the responsibility to ensure that its institution has a fiscally sustainable model for maintaining its academic standards while offering an affordable college education. In today's challenging economic environment, this necessarily requires trustees to be proactive in their governing role, taking note of innovative practices at other colleges and universities, synthesizing those initiatives with a track record of success, and, when appropriate, incorporating such models into the board's strategic priorities.

A BLUEPRINT FOR REFORM:
System-Wide Success Stories

The transformative potential of board action is realized only when trustees develop a comprehensive plan and see through its implementation. Both the University System of Maryland and the State University System of Florida, whose efforts were featured in ACTA's *Bold Leadership, Real Reform: Best Practices in University Governance* guide, continue to demonstrate how trustees can initiate programs that lead to continued, long-term results.

University System of Maryland:
Tackling Costs through Efficiency and Innovation

When it launched its Effectiveness and Efficiency (E&E) Initiative in 2004, the University System of Maryland (USM) was an institution in crisis. Like many other state university systems at the time, it faced increasing budgetary pressures. Tuition was rising, and the perception among students, lawmakers, and the public was that the USM was wasteful and profligate.[9] Thanks to the E&E Initiative, spearheaded by System Chancellor William E. Kirwan and the System's board of regents, the USM has been able to save over a half billion dollars in costs, hold tuition increases to a minimum, increase faculty classroom contact, and expedite time-to-degree.[10]

In 2015, with a decade of achievements under its belt, the USM launched **E&E 2.0**—the next phase of the System's efforts to implement best practices across its campuses. Approved by the board of regents in early 2015, E&E 2.0 represents "a critical new phase of USM's legacy of efforts to yield savings and cost avoidance while enhancing academic quality."[11] While the goals of E&E 2.0 parallel those of the first Effectiveness and Efficiency Initiative, E&E 2.0 focuses on a new set of improvements, many of which ought to be of interest to colleges and universities throughout the country.

The USM's objectives include expanding the use of **predictive analytics** in order to increase student success. Rather than simply looking backwards, predictive analytics look forward by using data "to improve early recognition of individual student problems" in order to "provide early intervention" and improve performance.

Near-term efficiency goals also include the **improvement of procurement policies and procedures**, with a focus on "the areas of sponsored research, technology transfer, and cybersecurity," as well as a **systemic analysis of USM-owned real estate and assets** with an eye toward optimizing their use.[12]

The USM also has set long-term objectives for E&E 2.0. The Initiative has been charged with seeking out opportunities to "break

down silos," pursuing "organizational changes that will allow academic and business processes that cross several organizational units to become more effective and efficient." Perhaps the most promising goal the USM has set is the **critical evaluation of the ratio of administrative staff to faculty** at each of the institutions under the System's umbrella. When increases in administrative staff are deemed "unusual," the cause of the increase is to be thoroughly investigated and addressed.

One of the more interesting long-term objectives of E&E 2.0 pertains to the delivery of online education programs and other technological improvements. Recognizing the tremendous advantages the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) has in these areas, the USM has set a goal of leveraging UMUC's expertise in order to improve institutions System-wide. This model—in which the unique strengths of one institution are identified and expanded across multiple campuses—has the potential to serve as a model for other large public university systems.[13]

Of course, a project is only as good as its results, and that means that nothing is more important than identifying the right metrics and measuring them meticulously. On the first front, E&E 2.0 is on track, identifying "data on student retention and completion, improved learning outcomes, student and institutional cost savings, generated revenue, and strategic reallocation of resources" as key measurements to track success.[14] In doing so, the USM promises to focus its attention on *outputs* rather than *inputs*, avoiding the trap that prevents so much real improvement in the higher education sector.

E&E 2.0 is still fresh, so it remains unclear what fruits it will bear. But by striving to build on the momentum of earlier successes in order to keep the reform ball rolling, the USM serves as a much-needed model.

State University System of Florida:
Accountability Reforms Drive Real Results

At the turn of the century, the University System of Maryland had encountered escalating budgetary pressures along with a decrease in public trust, but it was the Great Recession that forced the State University System of Florida (SUSF) to face its system-wide problems directly. It rose to this challenge more effectively than almost any other public university system in the country. As we noted in *Bold Leadership, Real Reform*, as well as in our state report *Florida Rising*, the SUSF was able to cut costs, improve graduation rates, and keep tuition low while facing shrinking budgets and a poor economy.[15]

In the time since, state funding for the SUSF has rebounded. However, the board of governors (BOG) has not allowed this influx of resources to curb its commitment to efficiency and reform.

One of the boldest measures taken by the board of governors and the state government was the adoption of a **performance-based funding model** for the schools in the System. Approved by the BOG in January of 2014 and signed into law in 2016, the model was developed over the course of two years, in conjunction with administrators, boards of trustees, and other relevant stakeholders. The model consists of 10 key metrics "that evaluate Florida institutions on a range of issues." Eight metrics are shared across all SUSF universities; the other two metrics are selected from an approved list, with one chosen for each institution by the board of governors and the other chosen by each university's own board of trustees.[16] The annual funding that is allocated to each university in the System is based on its ability to improve compared to previous performance on these metrics. The three worst-performing universities are not eligible for any performance-based funds and face reductions in their base funding level.[17]

This represents an important shift from the SUSF's previous funding model, which allocated funds on the basis of enrollment. By changing the incentive structure for the universities in the System, the board is able to hold universities rigorously accountable. Each institution's performance on these metrics is also included in the System's annual accountability reports and is available and user-friendly for the public, allowing parents, students, and taxpayers to monitor the state's public universities.[18] The System has already seen improvements since the adoption of the performance-based funding model, with Florida Atlantic University, for example, making significant strides in its graduation rate.[19]

The BOG has also continued to implement many of the initiatives it adopted in response to the recession. It has continued to put a heavy emphasis on improving and encouraging distance-learning, and the System is number two in the nation in the total number of students who have enrolled in at least one distance-learning course. The System's universities have also continued their efforts at program prioritization, cutting academic programs when necessary and redirecting those funds to areas that better play to each institution's strengths and the needs of students and the state. Degrees in STEM fields are up 30% system-wide. And, last but not least, the SUSF has continued to hold the line on tuition increases and currently has the fourth-lowest tuition and fees of any state system.[20]

Budget appropriations for the University of Florida (UF) were also reduced by nearly $54 million in 2011, the same year that the University received 29,000 applications for just 6,400 open slots in the following year's incoming class.[21] The board of governors knew that it had to increase access to the University while also addressing the deep budget cuts, so it worked with the Florida State Board of Education to adopt the findings of a Florida Higher Education Classroom Utilization Study in order to ensure that all existing facilities were being used to their full extent. Recommendations made from these findings led the University of Florida to try an enrollment experiment that resulted in the current Innovation Academy program. Joseph Glover, provost

and senior vice president for academic affairs, noticed that enrollment was falling by about 2,000 between the fall and spring semesters due to study abroad, internships, and graduation.[22] To offset this dip in numbers, UF decided to create a spring-summer cohort of students that would take on-campus classes only during those semesters, leaving the fall open for other opportunities, such as study abroad programs, online courses, or internships. While its original intention was simply to expand access, Innovation Academy has become part of UF's focus on innovation and entrepreneurship.[23]

Budgetary pressures surely realign the incentives of higher education in favor of reform, but it is vitally important that colleges and universities continue to improve quality and accountability even as the economy improves. The SUSF and its board of governors have a lot to teach other institutions about doing just that.

A BLUEPRINT FOR REFORM:
Inter-Campus Collaboration

Course-Sharing Initiatives:
Expanding Academic Quality and Strengthening Enrollments and Budgets

Many academically vital programs—notably foreign language departments—remain under-enrolled, creating tension between the educational contributions of such programs and the economic reality of scarce resources. But there are institutions that are meeting this challenge through an approach that combines cooperation, compromise, and innovation.

Associated Colleges of the South: Shared Services for Instruction

Collaboration of any kind is a tough sell, requiring hard work and open minds. At institutions of higher education, curricular collaboration may be the toughest sell of all, since faculty members are infamously wedded to their own approaches to the subjects they teach. And as

they see enrollments decline, they become increasingly protective of their own academic units and worry that they will face downsizing. Yet, collaboration is possible, and the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS) is leading the way.

In *Bold Leadership, Real Reform*, we profiled the New Paradigm Initiative, an effort of the ACS that uses remote video technology in order to facilitate **inter-campus course sharing** in areas such as Chinese languages and the arts.

Today, the ACS is attempting to replicate that success in other fields. In 2016, the ACS launched a five-year faculty advancement program with the support of a $2.7 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. One of the key areas of focus that the grant will support is a set of experiments in collaborative curricula. These will build on the work of the New Paradigm Initiative and demonstrate how, contrary to widespread assumptions in higher education, liberal arts colleges can find ways to collaborate on specific academic endeavors to the benefit of all involved.[24]

The importance of developing teams to deal with administrative, logistical, and technological obstacles cannot be overstated. As we discuss later in this guide, these are the kinds of difficulties that pose the starkest challenges to cooperation, and they often scare colleges and universities away from even attempting to collaborate.

With the participation of faculty and administrators, this initiative will build three different types of teams: an **Administrative Logistics team**, **Technology teams**, and **Curricular Content teams**. The Logistics team will tackle the key administrative

obstacles that often arise in collaborative academic efforts, from "inter-institutional registration, differing academic calendars, different credit systems (credit hours versus units), financial exchange, and accreditation." The Technology team will draw on the expertise of IT and library staff in order to "address matters related to different learning management systems, course materials curation and copyright concerns, and hardware and software availability."[25]

The importance of developing teams to deal with administrative, logistical, and technological obstacles cannot be overstated. As we discuss later in this guide, these are the kinds of difficulties that pose the starkest challenges to cooperation, and they often scare colleges and universities away from even attempting to collaborate. In order to reap the benefits of institutional cooperation, it is vitally important to address these matters up front, in order to pave the smoothest possible road for working together.

It will fall to the Curricular Content teams to "address course offerings, course rotations, program requirements, teaching loads, and assessment of both students and faculty," in addition to researching and selecting "appropriate models for collaboration." These teams consist of deans and faculty, and pilot groups have already been formed in German, Arabic, and philosophy.[26]

The ACS is also experimenting with a variety of programmatic, institutional, and course-based models of collaboration. Two exciting applications of these models are **combined study abroad programs** and **collaborative virtual departments**. The former will help increase the number of foreign study options for students, while making existing programs more financially sustainable. And the creation of virtual departments looks toward allowing faculty to work with more students and create cross-campus courses. The model's initial focus is on language and philosophy, but the hope is to expand to other low-enrollment areas such as African-American Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, and Asian Studies. Successful department-level cooperation could represent a new front in nationwide efforts to collaborate across

institutions in order to pool resources and retain struggling programs without increasing costs or compromising academic quality.[27]

The Sunoikisis Project: The Classics Go Digital

Efforts such as ACS's course-sharing initiative have the potential to expand far beyond the original participating institutions. For example, the **Sunoikisis Project**, which began as an ACS collaboration two decades ago, is today a leading player in the field of foreign language education; it shows the enduring possibilities and promise for growth in inter-college cooperation.[28]

Sunoikisis was comprised originally of classics professors from the ACS's 16 member colleges. The objective of the community was to leverage technology in conjunction with other innovations to combine low-enrollment courses (classes that had five or fewer students), increase the number of courses offered to classics majors, create a professional network of professors in small departments (most ACS classics departments have only one or two professors), and create efficiencies in departments that were not always financially viable.

As the work of the program continued to expand, Sunoikisis consistently looked for ways that would lead to its future growth, seeking the widest platform on which to work. In 2006, the initiative became a project of the National Institute of Technology and Liberal Education (NITLE), which expanded access to Sunoikisis to approximately 90 colleges in the United States. When NITLE ended, Sunoikisis migrated to Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies, which has been its home since 2009. To date, 160 faculty from 100 different institutions have participated in its programs. Since the turn of the century, over 500 students have enrolled in Sunoikisis's inter-institutional advanced Greek and Latin courses, and more than 300 students have taken its reading in translation courses.[29]

What makes Sunoikisis unique is its wide variety of models of institutional collaboration, each developed as the project continued to grow and expand throughout the country and, eventually, the globe. Due to the scope of the effort, a flexible and nimble model

of cooperation was essential. Some Sunoikisis programs run on a **contributive model**, in which instructors will cooperate in creating small-scale projects to which each instructor contributes in accordance with his or her ability. This model has been deployed for the development of digital education programs. The **cooperative model** allows one faculty member to take the lead on offering a course for a term—with the support of other participating faculty—and then rotates primary responsibility among the group members each term. Finally, the **collaborative model** allows faculty to craft courses together, with all participating on an ongoing basis. Offering this wide range of options maximizes participation by institutions and instructors, as all relevant stakeholders contribute while navigating the many institutional pressures and changing needs they inevitably face.

Despite this diverse array of models, Sunoikisis has always placed tremendous importance on the need to maintain the intimacy and quality of instruction that has traditionally characterized the residential liberal arts college. As such, all Sunoikisis courses take place at institutions with an instructor on the ground and include synchronous components as well as frequent peer review.[30]

Sunoikosis points the way toward a world in which college consortia can grow beyond small cooperatives and benefit students enrolled at dozens of universities. By remaining nimble and developing multiple models of cooperation while maintaining a strong emphasis on academic quality, the future of course-sharing could be even more extensive and ambitious than many today imagine.

The Shared Course Initiative: Bringing Foreign Language Instruction to Scale

As previously noted, course sharing initiatives are especially promising—and increasingly important—for college foreign language departments. Although a substantial body of research demonstrates the professional value of a robust liberal arts education, students are continuing to shift their interest away from humanities and foreign language study in favor of fields they deem to have better employment prospects. Ironically, even as colleges embrace the imperatives of global

perspectives and multiculturalism, they fail to instill arguably the most crucial aspect of global understanding: learning the languages of other nations. Nationwide, just over 8% of college students are enrolled at any given time in a language course. Funding is hard to come by, and this issue is especially acute for less-commonly taught languages such as Dutch, Bengali, Tibetan, and Zulu.[31] The **Shared Course Initiative (SCI)**, featured in *Bold Leadership, Real Reform*, has proven to be a tremendously successful model for overcoming this challenge by leveraging technology.

Established in 2012, the SCI is a project of three Ivy League schools: Yale, Cornell, and Columbia. It began as a bottom-up initiative powered by strong faculty and student interest, and in just a few years, the SCI has been able to reach a critical mass of students and demonstrate its sustainability. In the fall of 2012, the SCI taught eight languages; today, it offers 19 languages in over 40 courses. Enrollment in SCI courses has doubled since it began, growing from 70–80 students to 160–170.[32]

As we noted in *Bold Leadership, Real Reform*, the SCI's courses are not typical online classes. They are live, real-time courses conducted through video-conferencing. Spatially, SCI course classrooms are designed to look like extended virtual spaces, allowing students and faculty to feel as much as possible as if they were in a single classroom together. High-quality technology ensures that instructors, though they may find themselves many miles away from some of their students, are able to observe students' body language and hear and correct students' phonology—especially important in language instruction.[33]

The SCI's success did not come easily, and the challenges the project has faced—as well as the ways it has overcome them—are especially instructive. Many of the chief difficulties faced by the SCI have been, predictably, administrative in nature. Different institutions, even ones as similar as the elite private universities that make up the Initiative, inevitably have different language requirements, academic calendars, and class schedules. In order to set a framework for dealing with these complexities early on, Yale, Cornell, and Columbia drafted

a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the universities. The MOU dealt with a wide range of potential administrative snags, from course listings and credits to grading and academic integrity.[34] By laying out the major principles for institutional collaboration at the beginning of their collaboration, the SCI has been better able to work through many of the types of managerial difficulties that may prevent other schools from pursuing intensive institutional cooperation in the first place.

Beyond administrative challenges, the SCI also has faced hurdles its leadership had not predicted, largely stemming from differences in institutional culture. Simple as it may sound, the key to facing these types of difficulties has been regular and ongoing communication among project directors and technology and pedagogy support teams. Part of what made such conversations about institutional *differences* productive were the *commonalities* shared among SCI universities. As Yale's Nelleke Van Deusen-Scholl and Columbia's Stéphane Charitos have written, "This challenge underscores the importance of selecting partners that not only have a desire and the

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resources to collaborate, but that also share enough institutional similarities that any differences can be bridged though ongoing dialog[ue]."[35]

One of the most important aspects of the SCI is the program's commitment to evaluating and studying the effectiveness of its model. The SCI measures quantitative and qualitative results from both

student and faculty perspectives. Every student is asked if he or she is willing to participate in studies on the effectiveness of SCI instruction, and most agree to be part of the effort. Students fill out questionnaires on their backgrounds and interest in their language of study and are asked to provide a self-assessment of their own skills. If their language skills are advanced enough, they also take a standardized language assessment test.[36] These tests are subsequently given each academic year and are administered without the involvement of students' regular instructors. This allows the SCI to track students' progress in a reliably detached manner. Interviews with select instructors as well as regular class observations provide qualitative information on the perspectives and experiences of the language teachers.

As the SCI moves into the future, an especially promising development is a research project, led by Dr. Van Deusen-Scholl and running parallel to the Initiative, that will use these data in order to determine how the SCI's mode of instruction compares to more traditional teaching methods. The data-collection process will end in 2017, at which point more intensive analysis will begin. Preliminary results indicate, however, that students studying a language through the Shared Course Initiative's live, synchronous courses perform at least as well, if not better, than their peers receiving traditional classroom instruction.

Ideally, this research project could help point the way for other schools to adopt parts of the SCI model and adapt them to their own institutions. Such an effort need not be confined to other elite research universities. Dr. Van Deusen-Scholl has already participated in workshops for liberal arts colleges to learn from the SCI, and a symposium will soon bring together different institutions that have begun following similar models. Though the SCI was formed specifically to facilitate the teaching of less-commonly taught languages, the principles and instructional methods of the Initiative may contain lessons for instruction in more-commonly taught languages, such as French, German, and Arabic. While the future of funding for SCI courses remains uncertain, its instructional model looks promising.[37]

The close cooperation and collaboration between institutions that a project like the SCI requires does not come easily. But choosing the right partners, facing challenges head-on, and maintaining a laser-like focus on metrics and outcomes can allow institutions to maintain their commitment to the subjects within a robust liberal education that are under the greatest financial pressure, and, in turn, provide their students with the kind of education they will need in our ever-shrinking world.

Joining Forces for Reform:
The University Innovation Alliance

In 2015, we described California State University's Graduation Initiative, a coordinated effort across CSU's 23 campuses to raise graduation rates. The **University Innovation Alliance (UIA)**, launched in 2014, is a concerted effort to do the same across 11 separate public research universities: Oregon State University, University of California–Riverside, Arizona State University, University of Texas–Austin, University of Kansas, Iowa State University, Purdue University, Michigan State University, The Ohio State University, Georgia State University, and University of Central Florida. The institutions in the Alliance range from state flagships to land-grant colleges to younger public universities. A main focus that unites these schools is their socioeconomically diverse student bodies—one third of the students who attend Innovation Alliance schools are Pell Grant-eligible.[38]

The need for this kind of effort could not be more acute. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that the six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who matriculated at a four-year institution in fall 2008 was a mere 60%. At public institutions, the graduation rate was even slightly lower.[39] Even allowing for transfers, these statistics, as President Barack Obama observed, are unacceptable. If universities are to address this crisis successfully, they will need to follow the UIA's lead in "dial[ing] back the hyper-competitiveness and quest for exclusivity in higher

education that can stymie collaboration on how to help students get to graduation."[40] At its inception, the UIA's public goal was to "graduate an additional 68,000 students over the next ten years, at least half from under-represented backgrounds." Today, the UIA is poised to surpass its goal by fully 26,000 graduates.[41]

A governing board consisting of the 11 university presidents and chancellors or their delegates oversees the UIA. They meet on a regular basis, as do various campus liaisons and peers from the Alliance's working groups. However, the UIA is committed to maintaining "a very light administrative structure."[42] Grants from six partner foundations fund the project.[43]

The Innovation Alliance represents an exciting new model for institutional collaboration aimed at improving outcomes. Each of the participating schools has its own track record of successful reform. (We highlight two UIA institutions—Purdue University and Arizona State University—in the case studies later in this guide.) The UIA model is "built around a 'lead' and 'collaborator' university relationship." Universities that are successfully using innovative practices provide guidance for other UIA schools that wish to follow suit. By building upon proven innovations, the UIA hopes to "develop a pilot mechanism that enhances universities' ability to collaborate[.]" The goal of this framework is to test ideas more swiftly and speed up innovation by reducing redundancies and errors.[44]

The UIA has laid out five potential project areas, with an eye toward improving graduation rates for low-income students, namely Predictive Analytics and Data-Driven Interventions; Adaptive Learning; Financial Interventions; Pre-College (University) or Bridge Programs; and Targeted Student Supports.[45] The Innovation Alliance has already published specific project goals for its Predictive Analytics collaborative scale initiative. The mentor institutions—Georgia State University, Arizona State University, and the University of Texas–Austin—have laid out mentorship examples that will soon be scaled upward for wider distribution and adapted for implementation at other UIA schools.[46]

For example, Georgia State University is currently spearheading a Monitoring Advising Analytics to Promote Success (MAAPS) project, which will study 10,000 students across the UIA's 11 schools, with the support of an $8.9 million First in the World grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Students in the study will benefit from a proactive, data-driven advising system designed to detect and intervene when a student is in danger of falling behind academically, because of, for example, a bad grade or a missed requirement for his or her major. With this early warning tracking system, Georgia State has seen both an increase in graduation rates as well as a decrease in time-to-degree on its own campus, and the biggest gains have been for the most at-risk populations of students. In fact, with this program and other UIA initiatives, Georgia State has actually closed the graduation rate gap among students from varying racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Georgia State hopes to build upon this success by sharing its advising system with the other schools in the UIA.[47]

In addition to scaling up proven innovations, the UIA also seeks to develop new solutions and test the effectiveness of new methods to improve student success, as well as increase communication and adoption among member institutions.[48] They also have developed a comprehensive framework for data-sharing between institutions.[49]

Like many of the other initiatives ACTA highlighted in *Bold Leadership, Real Reform,* as well as in this guide, the UIA has set specific expected targets from the very outset. The UIA prospectus set a projection within 10 years of a 5% increase in annual degree awards and a 3% increase in the proportion of baccalaureate degrees awarded to low-income students. The prospectus also laid out specific projections for improvements in annual transfer, retention, and progress rates.[50] By employing these clear metrics, the UIA is subjecting itself to the kind of scrutiny that will be absolutely necessary if it is to prove that its member schools can scale and replicate their past successes.

In a higher education landscape in which funds are increasingly scarce and results increasingly dubious, cooperation among institutions

will be absolutely vital if colleges and universities are to make serious strides in improving completion rates.[51] The Innovation Alliance represents a model for leveraging past successes that can be replicated by other groups of colleges and universities across the country.

A BLUEPRINT FOR REFORM:
Campus Case Studies

What follows in this guide are three case studies, which present a practical examination of granular details and first-hand testimony to provide a "how to" framework for implementing reform.

Purdue University:
Delivering on the Promise of Affordability and Quality

Affordability Initiatives

One of Purdue University's most impressive accomplishments is its ongoing tuition freeze, which will continue through the 2018–19 academic year, with in-state students paying $10,002 and out of state students paying $28,804. The most recent class was the biggest since 2006, with 48,000 applicants and 7,200 newly enrolled students. It also is important to note that in-state enrollment increased from the previous year, and that this class is the most ethnically diverse to date, with a 17% jump in underrepresented minority students. Additionally, between 92 and 95% of first-year students live in campus housing, and Purdue has one of the lowest room and board costs of any school in the Big Ten.[52]

But Purdue has done more than freeze tuition in order to prioritize affordability. For instance, the "Back a Boiler" program, an income-share agreement (ISA) funded by the Purdue Research Foundation, was launched on April 2, 2016. An ISA is an innovative way to make education more affordable, and it differs from a traditional loan in that students do not pay interest on the amount they are awarded.

Students receive funding from the Purdue Research Foundation and agree to pay back a set percentage of their salary after graduation over a term of nine years or less. Students' obligations to make payments are linked to a specific percentage of their projected income. In its inaugural year, more than 140 junior and senior students enrolled in the program (50% of whom were in-state students), representing more than 70 unique majors. Disbursements averaged $14,000 per student, totaling about $2 million.[53] Moving forward, the University will explore the feasibility of expanding the program to include younger students, and think about ways that existing student debt can be refinanced using income-share agreements. It is the innovative, risk taking culture of both Purdue's board of trustees and administration, as well as the cooperation between them, which makes such initiatives exemplary.

The trustees and the University also work together in their commitment to an "all funds" budgeting model in which every dollar is accounted for and allocated to a specific initiative. This emphasis on careful budgeting also means creating budgetary savings wherever possible, which led to a reexamination of employees' health care plans. By switching to a high-deductible health care plan for its employees, health benefits have actually increased while the employees' total costs have decreased by 4% since 2013. Both the number of employees participating in the health care plan as well as the number of spousal and family participants have increased, and the cost to the University has decreased by 5%. Furthermore, the 2016 fiscal year budget approved by the board of trustees also factors in a 3.5% merit-based pay raise for faculty and increases entry-level pay for full-time service and clerical staff.[54]

Additionally, when President Mitch Daniels began his tenure in 2013, he set up an email account (savings@purdue.edu) for anyone in the campus community to contribute ideas for how the University could enhance its affordability. This open access has helped to cultivate new ideas, such as Purdue's recent partnership with Amazon. As at other institutions, the cost of textbooks can be a crushing burden on students, who spend $1,200–$1,300 on books per year. Purdue

therefore negotiated with Amazon in 2014 to create the Purdue Student Store on Amazon. This co-branded enterprise allows students to purchase textbooks and other college essentials at a lower cost. In 2015, Purdue also opened pick-up points on campus where students could claim their online orders with free one-day or same-day shipping. Since its inception, this partnership has led to a total of $1.8 million in textbook savings—allowing students to save up to 30% per year on their books. Most importantly, Amazon returns a percentage of sales through the Purdue Student Store to the University, which goes directly towards other affordability initiatives, such as continuing the tuition freeze. To date, this rebate program has generated $1.5 million for Purdue.[55]

Active Learning

Purdue's story is about much more than cost-control: It is about investing in what matters. Coupled with emphasis on affordability is the importance of strategic investment. As part of a strategic plan to invest in teaching and research excellence, Purdue has recently funded 10 initiatives, including $250 million for the Pillars of Excellence in the Life Sciences and an Active Learning Center, where students will benefit from innovative teaching and learning methods and modernized classrooms. The Purdue IMPACT (Instruction Matters: Purdue Academic Course Transformation) program, moreover, serves to engage and educate teachers about new instructional methods focused on student-centered, active learning practices. With a $2 million per year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, professors in 20–30 undergraduate courses go through this program each semester. The goal is to have one fourth of the curriculum at Purdue consist of courses that use the IMPACT methods in order to foster student success and well-being as well as institutional cultural change.[56]

Purdue's commitment to innovative teaching and learning also extends beyond the walls of higher education through a charter school that will soon be opened in Indianapolis. Beginning in the fall of

2017, the Purdue Polytechnic Indianapolis (PPI) High School will welcome its first cohort of ninth grade students. Funding for this school comes from the state (through a partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools), alumni donors, PPI's K–12 budget, as well as an initial planning grant provided by USA Funds, a nonprofit corporation that works to enhance access to and success in postsecondary education. PPI's vision is to define and enhance the K–12 academic preparation essential for STEM careers, including the readiness to enter demanding higher education programs. Its curriculum will simultaneously embrace the skills needed for successful careers in industry and in leadership positions. Instead of following a typical schedule of class periods, learning and assessment will be 100% competency-based and structured around projects that are designed to give students real-world experience, with teachers addressing knowledge gaps as they surface in the course of each project. Students will have work-based learning and internship opportunities in the STEM fields throughout high school. One of Purdue's important goals for this project is to prepare a highly diverse student body for success in today's economy. These Indianapolis public school students will have "direct admission" to Purdue, meaning that they are guaranteed admission after graduating from high school, assuming they meet certain admissions requirements.[57] Thus, this powerful program can serve as an important step towards an education at Purdue, enhancing the university's contribution to the nation's capacity in STEM, or serve as a direct pathway to a high-tech career, both of which are urgently needed opportunities for the population of underserved students who will enroll in PPI.

Upholding Freedom of Speech

Finally, colleges and universities can also look to Purdue as a model for upholding freedom of speech. In May of 2015, its board met to amend the University's speech policies in an attempt to achieve a "green light" rating from Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE).[58]

As a result of this meeting, Purdue became the first public university to adopt the principles of the University of Chicago's 2014 Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression, which at least 17 colleges and universities—both public and private—have either adopted in full or used as a template.

The imperative of free speech also was incorporated into the 2016 "Boiler Gold Rush" orientation schedule, with a program clearly explaining the University's policies on invited speakers and disapproval of censorship. More than 6,000 incoming students voluntarily attended the program, which featured a combination of videos and student-performed skits inspired by events that had taken place at Purdue, as well as a faculty panel discussion. Psychological Sciences Professor Kip Williams, who was on the faculty task force that helped create this orientation program, identified the challenge colleges must confront: "Too often, our reaction to people or groups whose opinions or actions are different from ours is to ban them or censor them or punish them or somehow drown out the speech rather than engaging in verbal communication with each other." The goal of Purdue's orientation program was to address this issue at the very beginning of students' college careers, creating a culture that promotes the free exchange of ideas and open inquiry. The orientation on free speech was such a success, in fact, that NASPA, an organization of Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, has asked the University to present its methodology for the program at an upcoming conference.

> Colleges and universities can also look to Purdue as a model for upholding freedom of speech. . . . Purdue became the first public university to adopt the principles of the University of Chicago's 2014 Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression.

The program was also recently featured on FIRE's website, which now gives Purdue and all its regional campuses its coveted green light speech code rating.[59]

University of Colorado:
Restoring Financial and Institutional Integrity

Instituting a Culture of Accountability

When former U.S. Senator Hank Brown assumed the leadership of the University of Colorado (CU) system in 2005, the University faced an array of challenges, ranging from research misconduct to legal problems associated with its football program. Public perception of the University—along with enrollments—suffered, exacerbated by the institution's unwillingness to respond to press inquiries.

In his first few days as president, Brown took swift and highly visible actions to reassure the University community, as well as public stakeholders, of the institution's commitment to accountability. A press conference, lasting for hours, vividly demonstrated CU's new commitment to transparency. He eliminated 10 administrative positions in the president's office, banned the use of public funds to purchase alcohol, and relinquished the president's reserved parking space. Brown then took up a number of broader initiatives to make clear that the University's focus is to serve the public interest. This meant an overhaul of the University accounting system in consultation with the State Auditor to bring full transparency to University activity. President Brown also initiated a complete review of the University's policies on tenure and took aim at grade inflation by disclosing students' class rankings on their transcripts.[60]

Additionally, a 46-member community panel convened to study diversity at the three University campuses made recommendations for improvement. Brown himself initiated a recruiting campaign for highly qualified students from high schools with large minority enrollments. He visited and spoke at a number of African American and Latino churches throughout 2006. The class entering in the fall of 2006 set a record for diversity enrollment. The adoption of the community panel's

recommendations aided in improving the frayed relations between CU and the Denver community.[61]

By restoring public trust, Brown positioned CU so that it would later be able to weather a difficult economic landscape during the Great Recession. Brown worked with the state governor to help pass a statewide ballot initiative designed to provide funding for higher education, among other needs, taking unpaid time off to speak on behalf of the measure. During each year of his three-year term, the University set records in alumni giving, research grants, and public funding, while out-of-state enrollment also reached record levels.[62]

Due in part to the 2008 recession, however, the University has encountered deep financial strain during his successor Bruce Benson's presidency, with state support declining from $229 million in 2008 to $184 million in 2015. In response, Benson adopted a three-pronged business-minded approach to keeping the University financially secure: "Find efficiencies, build collaboration, and generate new revenue." Between 2010 and 2011, dozens of system administrative staff were dismissed in order to streamline operations, and one-quarter of the faculty taught one additional course for a small pay increase. There also was an increased focus on online education, which reached 42,000 in annual enrollment in 2014, as well as study abroad programs, which have created more than $30 million in additional revenue for the Boulder campus. Furthermore, the University reduced its number of administrative policies from 210 in 2008 to 86 in 2015—or from 650 pages to 260—which substantially reduced red tape and multiple-step reporting. The cost threshold at which a university event requires paperwork approval was increased from $100 to $500, decreasing need by 8,000 forms annually. In addition to amending internal policies, CU worked with Colorado legislators to find ways to operate more efficiently. The University was permitted to use its own internal system rather than the state's procurement system, saving $8.3 million between 2010 and 2015. It also found ways to streamline the approval process for cash-funded capital construction projects and conduct its own plumbing and electrical inspections on large projects, leading

to efficiencies and savings. CU was able to generate new revenue by selling assets no longer deemed necessary. The University freed up funding by selling property it no longer needed, including a conference center in Aspen.[63]

In efforts to further financial transparency, System Vice President of Budget and Finance Todd Saliman created a publicly available, interactive analysis called Cost Drivers at CU. This online database, found at www.cu.edu/cost-drivers-cu, answers questions such as how much CU spends on educating its students, what that money is spent on, and how spending rates have changed over time, allowing comparisons between CU's campuses. The comprehensive analysis pulls data from the Colorado Department of Higher Education Budget Data Book, as well as University reports.[64] Initiatives such as these demonstrate the effort of the CU system and its trustees to understand the complexities of university finances, enabling them to advocate on CU's behalf to keep public higher education a priority for the state. CU also continues to benefit from informed and engaged trustees—who have played an equally important role in improving the University of Colorado.

> [University of Colorado regent Stephen Ludwig] recommends that boards nationwide be clear about how much cash is available sitting in various accounts, especially when considering possible tuition increases, and carefully reexamine board and university policies to ensure transparency.

For example, as described in an episode of ACTA's Higher Ed Now multimedia series, University of Colorado regent Stephen Ludwig raised questions about "plant funds" and urged trustees to demand

transparency, after discovering large sums of unrestricted funds being saved for future buildings. He recommends that boards nationwide be clear about how much cash is available sitting in various accounts, especially when considering possible tuition increases, and carefully reexamine board and university policies to ensure transparency.[65]

Community College Transfer Program

Regent Ludwig also played a pivotal role in the creation of an innovative community college transfer program in Colorado. In 2010, the board of regents supported "CU Guaranteed," a program that guarantees admission to any arts and sciences program at CU's three campuses for Colorado community college transfer students who earn 30 credit hours and achieve at least a 2.7 grade-point average. President Benson observed that this practice would help increase the number of four-year degrees awarded in Colorado by allowing students to earn degrees more quickly, as well as bolster minority enrollment on CU's campuses. When considering such initiatives, as Regent Ludwig emphasized, it is important to employ various marketing strategies to make community college students aware of the opportunities that are available to them. Additionally, it is imperative that community college leaders continue to meet, as the 15 public community colleges in Colorado did in 2011, to discuss the program's successes and potential areas for improvement.[66]

Three-Year Online Degree

In a recent effort to expand college access and increase degree completion, three Colorado regents initiated a competitive grant application process with $200,000 awards for the best project designs for a three-year online-only degree program. Teams participating in the highly-collaborative application process must include faculty members from at least two of CU's campuses, with proposals involving members of all three campuses and those partnering with Colorado corporate, government, or nonprofit groups looked upon more favorably. Additionally, the program encourages faculty to use existing resources

to create the new classes, with a clear emphasis on cost-effectiveness. Regent Ludwig notes that, "higher ed culture across the country is very insular—there is not a lot of incentive to encourage faculty to collaborate across institutions." The board is currently reviewing the designs that have been submitted, and new programs are set to start in 2018.[67]

Upholding Freedom of Speech

The University of Colorado has also modeled commitment to protecting academic freedom. Beginning under President Brown's term, the University added protections against viewpoint discrimination to its personnel policies. Later, in 2013, regents Jim Geddes and Sue Sharkey put forth two resolutions further to defend intellectual diversity on Colorado's campuses: The first amended CU regent laws to prohibit discrimination based on political affiliation or philosophy, and the second called for a professional "campus climate survey" to clarify the university's commitment to "diversity in all of its forms, including diversity of political, geographic, cultural, intellectual and philosophical perspectives."[68] According to Sharkey, the goal of the climate survey was to "go beyond anecdotal evidence" to ensure that CU upheld its principles. She observed that "neither resolution is designed to impose an ideological agenda upon the University of Colorado, its campuses or its faculty."[69] Ultimately, the board unanimously agreed to include "political affiliation or political philosophy" in its nondiscrimination policy, which also pledges not to discriminate based on "race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status."[70]

Center for Western Civilization, Thought & Policy

An additional effort encouraging the free exchange of ideas on campus is underway at CU–Boulder's Center for Western Civilization, Thought & Policy. The predecessor Center for Western Civilization began in 2005 under the leadership of Professor Christian Kopff, and in 2007,

President Hank Brown found funding to increase its programming. Reorganized under President Benson's leadership in 2013, it added a visiting scholar program created in part to "expose students to a broader range of ideas" and support "an underrepresented viewpoint on their campus." The success of this initiative led to the creation of a permanent position for visiting scholars at the Center. The Center organizes courses and recently added a certificate program for students.

Ann Carlos, CU–Boulder's associate dean for social sciences, explains that the Center will eventually host up to four visiting scholars at a time: "In hosting a number of fellows, the center will focus on dialogue across intellectual perspectives."

According to the Center's mission statement, it "promotes critical reflection on the distinctive traditions and political perspectives that characterize Western Civilization. . . . Integral to this mission is the Center's commitment to fostering research, debate, and dialogue about the fundamental ideals of our time." It aims to provide a forum for "free and open discourse, study and research," as well as balanced conversations that include both conservative and liberal ideals in order to preserve intellectual diversity on campus.[71]

Arizona State University:
Reimagining the University of the Future

The New American University

An imperative for any board of trustees is to determine its institutional mission and to set strategic priorities. Arizona State University (ASU) has been unique in setting out to become a prototype for the modern American public research university. By re-envisioning the school as the New American University, ASU leadership under President Michael Crow has set ASU on a path to becoming a comprehensive university dedicated simultaneously to academic success, advances in research, increased access to education, and measurable societal impact. In practice, this initiative means ASU must be an institution committed to inclusion rather than exclusion by providing a high-quality education

that is broadly accessible. This also entails a commitment to being an "Adaptive University," which involves a multidisciplinary approach aimed at preparing students to be capable of learning and thinking in expansive terms. The second goal is to measure the impact of the University's research activity by its effect on the public good, encouraging faculty to look beyond their own academic and career pursuits to think about the impact their professional activities have upon the greater good. Finally, the university has an obligation to the broader community.[72] This focus has proven to be fruitful: *U.S. News & World Report*, for instance, recently ranked ASU number one for the second consecutive year on its "Most Innovative Schools" list, even ahead of elite schools like Stanford and MIT. According to President Crow, these rankings reflect the fact that, "Our students' paths to discovery don't have to stay within the boundaries of a single discipline.

The traditional structure of organizing university faculties into academic departments may well be an inefficient use of university resources. . . . [T]here is mounting evidence that this is not the optimal way to support the work of faculty or students, who suffer under siloed academic programs that lack broader perspective.

Our researchers team up with colleagues from disparate fields of expertise."[73]

Restructuring Academic Departments

The traditional structure of organizing university faculties into academic departments may well be an inefficient use of university resources. In *Intellectual Transformation and Budgetary Savings*

Through Academic Reorganization, ASU Provost Emerita and University Professor Elizabeth D. Capaldi Phillips writes about the disadvantage of this traditional organization, noting that it breeds competition and results in a rigidity that discourages collaboration among departments—collaboration which could otherwise allow for a wealth of new opportunities. The number of academic departments has continued to rise over the past decades, despite the expense associated with generating new departments. Columbia had 42 departments at the start of the 20th century; by the start of the 21st century, it had more than 85. But there is mounting evidence that this is not the optimal way to support the work of faculty or students, who suffer under siloed academic programs that lack broader perspective. Arizona State University restructured its academic operations by combining faculty into larger multidisciplinary groups based on their areas of interest and expertise to address these concerns.[74]

Graduate Education

In 2007, ASU untethered graduate education from departmental control and created graduate faculties based on who was qualified to supervise graduate work in a given field. As a result, the listings of faculty in doctoral programs grew by 72%, and over 620 faculty members were named members of multiple graduate programs. Additionally, ASU was able to create new interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs in subjects such as sustainability, biological design, and neuroscience, each of which included as many as 70 graduate faculty members from a variety of departments. This range of faculty knowledge increases the intellectual depth and opportunity available to students.[75]

Undergraduate Education

ASU also restructured undergraduate education in a similar way. Its School of Life Sciences developed 11 separate degree offerings by building six flexible faculties out of five existing departments. As a

result, offerings to students became broader and more efficient. Of course, a lot of advising must be made available to students when 11 different degree programs exist. So ASU incorporated into its advising E*Advisor, technology that can tailor degree programs to students' interests and present online degree paths. This type of innovation is crucial, as it has been shown to increase graduation and retention rates. At the University of Florida, for example, the four-year graduation rate increased 20% after 14 years of a similar program.

The success of academic consolidation demonstrated by ASU can be an example to all colleges and universities. ASU's Department of Political Science and its School of Global Studies, for example, combined to form the School of Government, Politics and Global Studies. The Departments of Bioengineering and Biomedical Informatics combined into the School of Biological and Health Systems Engineering. These measures ultimately saved the university $500,000 of recurring expenses for each eliminated unit—totaling about $13.4 million saved. What's more, the faculty in these new units have been able to interact in new ways, leading to new degree programs and research projects.[76]

School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership

In another innovation, Arizona State University recently launched its School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership, creating a transdisciplinary program utilizing the strengths of both its Center for Political Thought and Leadership and its Center for the Study of Economic Liberty. Capitalizing on ASU's "Adaptive University" model, the program is committed to creating principled leaders. It offers a bachelor's degree in "Great Ideas and Leadership" that steeps students in classics as a way of preparing them to address today's questions. In the future, the program plans to host public lectures along with its visiting scholars program to help students and greater university community to practice civil discourse.[77]

Conclusion and Next Steps

As is evident in this report, many of the programs and initiatives ACTA profiled in 2015—as well as other noteworthy projects in higher education—continue to grow, succeed, and inspire others. In their own ways, each represents a potential template for other institutions to study, repurpose, and replicate. As you look to these programs and consider developing your own, ACTA and our Institute for Effective Governance remain here for you as a resource and sounding board. But it also is our hope that you can be a resource for us. If your college or university is pursuing a promising new initiative, program, or collaboration, we want to hear about it. Active trustees and administrators who hold their institutions—and themselves—accountable serve as a motivational force to others, and ACTA will enthusiastically spread the word about successful projects. You can reach us by phone: 202-467-6787 or email: info@goacta.org, attention: Institute for Effective Governance.

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