Securing America’s Future: Workshops for Leaders of Independent Colleges and Universities

Innovation and the Independent College

Examples from the Sector

Explore Innovation Opportunities In:

1. Athletics
2. Career Connections
3. Community Engagement
4. Consortial Arrangements
5. Cost Containment
6. Curricular Reform
7. New Academic Programs
8. New Student Populations

A Report by

The Council of Independent Colleges

Read the full report at www.cic.edu/InnovationsReport.
About this Report

The signature activity of the Council of Independent Colleges’ initiative, Securing America’s Future, was a series of eight workshops hosted by CIC member presidents on campuses across the nation in 2016–2017. The goals of these workshops were to help member colleges and universities prepare for the future more effectively and become more engaged in promoting the value of the liberal arts and of independent colleges and universities. These gatherings brought together teams of presidents, chief academic officers, other administrators, and faculty leaders to explore key trends in higher education and society, the pressures that individual colleges and universities face, and potential solutions that can be pursued by their institutions. Approximately 500 campus leaders from more than 120 CIC member institutions participated in the workshops.

This module is part of a larger report, Innovation and the Independent College: Examples from the Sector. As a whole, the report presents an overview of the major points of discussion held during the workshops and references hundreds of examples of mission-driven innovations shared by the colleges and universities that sent teams to the workshops. Each module of the report is designed to be useful on its own, however, as a description of innovations in a particular area. I encourage you to distribute this module to trustees, faculty and administrative leaders, campus planning committees, and other constituents who might be aided in their efforts to lead change on campus—and then share the rest of the report. The full report and the other modules are available from the CIC website at www.cic.edu/InnovationsReport.

CIC staff members and I are well aware that many additional CIC institutions are improving the quality and efficacy of education in imaginative ways. I encourage CIC institutions to send these innovations to http://bit.ly/CICinnovates. These examples will be added to the online version of the report so that others may learn about these promising projects, too.

Richard Ekman
President
Council of Independent Colleges
March 2018
Consortial Arrangements

Connect with other institutions of higher education, businesses, employers, and other nonprofit organizations to engage in activities of mutual benefit.

Ours is an era of collaboration, partnership, and networking. By whatever name we call it, the emphasis in many fields is on relationships and their benefits. Many factors contribute to this phenomenon, including the heightened complexity of the global issues we confront, increased specialization of knowledge, greater frequency of travel and migration, and the powerful tools available for worldwide and instantaneous communication. For conceptual, economic, and logistical reasons, partnering with others rather than “going it alone” is increasingly valued.

The growth of collaboration is as evident in higher education as it is in other fields of endeavor. For many colleges and universities, joining consortia—usually, but not always, regionally based—offers attractive benefits. Often, economics is a driving factor. Consortia can provide a volume of activity that enhances purchasing power. Agreeing on a single vendor, for example, for software or hardware or even office supplies can have a similar effect. Shared facilities can lower both construction and maintenance costs. In some cases, shared positions can stretch personnel budgets. Certain arrangements, however, are based on programmatic, rather than economic, needs. Colleges clustered closely enough for students to commute can enrich their curricula in such areas as foreign-language instruction through agreements in which each partner assumes responsibility for teaching a particular field, rather than duplicating their offerings.
CHALLENGES: Joining with other organizations to pursue similar or complementary objectives can help independent colleges and universities meet enrollment targets, gain public respect, diversify revenue streams, cooperate rather than compete with other institutions of higher education, and prepare students for the world of work. It may, however, require institutions to make distinctions between unique, mission-based aspects of their operations and those that can be shared without diluting the mission or quality of their education.

Most of the following examples were provided by CIC member institutions and the expert presenters who participated in Securing America’s Future workshops in 2016–2017. They represent distinctive but adaptable responses to common challenges that independent colleges and universities face. Many other CIC colleges and universities also have developed strong collaborative relationships of mutual interest and benefit.

REGIONAL CONSORTIA

Some institutions have entered into consortia of public and private institutions in close proximity to one another. Some of these arrangements are longstanding. The Colleges of the Fenway, for example, was founded in 1996 and involves six adjoining campuses in Boston’s Fenway neighborhood—including Emmanuel College and Simmons College—that collaborate on security, intramural sports, the performing arts, and other student activities. Students cross-register in classes and share a common identification card.

In 2016, Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Luther Seminary in St. Paul launched a shared services alliance to reduce the cost of common business operations. The alliance began with shared library and information technology resources and has expanded to include human resources and other back-office support. The seminary also provides space at its downtown campus for Augsburg’s graduate program for physician assistants.

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• Augsburg Alliance with Seminary, http://bit.ly/2En5iBM
• Physician Assistant Program, http://bit.ly/2FQm1KZ
In 2016, the six private Catholic colleges in Iowa—Briar Cliff University, Clarke University, Loras College, Mercy College of Health Sciences, Mount Mercy University, and St. Ambrose University—formed a new consortium to reduce administrative and programmatic costs through collaboration while sustaining the distinctive role of Catholic higher education in the state.

The Five College Consortium, which incorporated in 1965 after successful collaborations dating back to 1914, consists of Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The institutions collaborate in the use of educational and cultural resources and facilities (including an online library borrowing system), open cross-registrations, open theater auditions, joint academic departments and programs, and an inter-campus transportation system.

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**Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Spelman College,** and the Morehouse School of Medicine constitute the Atlanta University Consortium. Among other things, they share some space and services, offer simple cross-registration for students, and purchase property and casualty insurance together at preferential rates. Along with the

For more than 50 years the Five College Consortium has offered students and faculty and staff members benefits beyond those offered on their home campus.

Photo credit: Francis Phan
Interdenominational Theological Center, they also operate the Robert W. Woodruff Library as a shared facility.

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* Atlanta University Consortium, www.auctr.edu

In 1970, **St. Lawrence University** joined forces with three other institutions in upstate New York (two state university campuses and a private research university) to form the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley. This relatively limited collaboration focuses on shared faculty development, academic support, and contract services that range from a web-based tax return preparation system for international students and scholars to discounted moving trucks for faculty and staff.

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**The Great Lakes Colleges Association**, a consortium of 13 independent colleges and universities in the Midwest, offers a wide array of educational opportunities. Some are supported by foundation grants, including study abroad programs, a tuition remission exchange, discipline-specific meetings for faculty members, an academic leadership and innovation institute for faculty members, a student/faculty research initiative with the Library of Congress, a variety of programs to improve teaching and learning, and linkages with similar institutions throughout the world.

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* Great Lakes Colleges Association, http://glca.org

Nearly 100 CIC colleges and universities are members of the Higher Education Systems and Services Consortium (or “The HESS Consortium”), a national, nonprofit, membership-run organization that focuses on lowering costs and increasing collaboration in administrative systems and services.

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ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

The experience of Hilbert College in Hamburg, New York, is an excellent example of one collaboration leading to others. Hilbert’s first collaboration was with eight other Catholic colleges in the Diocese of Buffalo. Today, Hilbert is a member of the Western New York Higher Education Consortium (a group of 21 public and private institutions that collaborate to recruit students, support workforce development in the region, and sponsor a women’s leadership institute); a health care trust (eight institutions that became the largest purchaser of health care in Western New York, saving the institutions millions of dollars in the process); and the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (a national organization that supports the members’ mission of Catholic higher education by providing a forum for dialogue and fostering and facilitating collaboration among members).

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In recent years, the presidents of Hilbert and St. Bonaventure University, whose main campuses are about 60 miles apart, undertook to determine whether collaboration to the point of merger would be mutually advantageous—but concluded that a merger was not feasible. Nonetheless, they developed a joint degree program in cybersecurity and continue to collaborate on other initiatives.

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• Trusteeship, “Failing Forward Toward a New Alliance,” http://bit.ly/2nLPrCz

Coker College in Hartsville, South Carolina, offers two bachelor’s degrees for Florence-Darlington Technical College graduates: BS degrees in business management and in applied criminology. Students earning an associate degree in business management, business marketing, or criminal justice technology can transfer those credits into Coker’s business management or criminology program and enter with junior standing.

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In January 2018, Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana, began collaborating with Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, to offer an online doctor of nursing practice degree program. This joint initiative is the first doctoral degree program offered by any of the five Mennonite Church USA colleges and universities.

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• Goshen and Eastern Mennonite Nursing Program, https://goo.gl/R1ndQw

Some institutions offer 3+2 or 4+1 programs through which students earn a bachelor’s degree from one institution and a master’s degree from a cooperating institution in a total of five years. Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland, offers a 3+2 dual degree program with either Columbia University in New York or Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, leading to two bachelor’s degrees in science and engineering. Saint Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont, offers two 3+2 engineering programs, one with the University of Vermont and one with Clarkson University. Both programs begin with mathematics and laboratory science courses at Saint Michael’s.

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• Goucher College 3+2 Programs, http://bit.ly/2BYakj1

The College of Wooster in Ohio offers a 3+2 program with the University of Akron that results in a BA from the former and a master’s degree in polymer engineering from the latter.

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Similarly, Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri, has entered into a partnership with the University of Missouri to offer a 3+3 juris doctor program that allows students to complete an undergraduate degree while also finishing the first year of law school. Students can earn both undergraduate and law degrees within six years.

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Many CIC member institutions collaborate with local high schools and community colleges to strengthen educational attainment in the community or region. For example, Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, Texas, received a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant in 2017 to build bridges to the local high school, its increasing population of Hispanic students, and their families. The grant will be used to develop a summer bridge program
with courses in Mexican American Studies and English composition. The university has had other pathway programs to connect high schools with the university for more than a decade. It also has transfer articulation agreements with three large community colleges, 12 clearly articulated degree programs, and reverse articulation to enable bachelor’s degree students to earn an associate’s degree.

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At the academic program level, Connecticut College in New London and Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, coordinate course offerings in their small Russian studies programs and share students and teaching resources in a collaboration that stops just short of being a joint degree program. Students participate in the shared classes through a combination of face-to-face meetings and online tools. This has allowed two undersized programs to maintain a robust major in a language that might otherwise become less popular among undergraduates.

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**PARTNERSHIPS WITH UNIVERSITIES ABROAD**

**Wesleyan College** in Macon, Georgia, established a dual-degree program in 2014 with Guangzhou University for qualified female students from China. This is part of an ongoing relationship that includes study abroad in China for Wesleyan students, a Confucius institute in Georgia, an American Cultural Center in Guangzhou, and a legacy of training Chinese students at the American women’s college that dates back to the early 20th century.

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As part of a mission-centered challenge to its students to “Take on your world,” St. Edward’s University in Austin, Texas, has developed exchange programs with an extensive network of 24 partner universities around the world.

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In 2015, Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana, launched a cross-cultural engineering program in collaboration with the Dalian Jiaotong University in northeastern
China. American students and faculty members have opportunities to study and teach in China while a cohort of engineering students from China will complete their degrees at Valparaiso’s Indiana campus. The university also has maintained a study center in Hangzhou, China, for more than 25 years.

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OTHER IDEAS AND ADVICE

The Association for Collaborative Leadership maintains an extensive list of academic consortia and collaborations and offers resources for higher education leaders who are interested in pursuing collaborations.

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At least since the early 1970s but increasing dramatically in recent years, independent colleges and universities have instituted a number of changes designed to attract transfer students from community colleges. For example, they assign admissions officers to visit area community colleges on a regular basis, develop articulation agreements that enable transfer students to graduate in four or five years, and hire transfer advisers specifically for these students.

As articulated by Kevin Dyerly, vice president for enrollment at the University of Redlands, “Creating more seamless pathways for community college students will be essential for many institutions. This will require embedding some of our staff on the community college campuses more frequently to develop and strengthen relationships with counselors and articulation officers. We must be in the conversation with community college students early on and better articulate that an independent college education can be an affordable and accessible option.” For other examples of partnerships with community colleges, please see the “New Student Populations” section of this report.
Cynthia Zane, president of Hilbert College and a presenter at one of the Securing America’s Future workshops, emphasized the value of inter-institutional collaboration in higher education. “True collaboration is hard,” she said. “It means you give up as well as gain. It requires communication, and it develops into a third entity.” Zane offered the following advice to would-be collaborators:

- Actively recruit trustees who have partnership and/or merger experiences for support;
- Retain strong ties with potential partners even when particular collaborations don’t work out;
- Abandon individualism to move the current institutional culture toward the collective good;
- Fiefdoms and siloes must be negotiated on your own campus first; and
- Initiative fatigue, managing expectations, and harkening back to former failed experiments must be overcome.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

• How does your institution identify community needs that the college could help meet?

• What existing collaborations might be expanded or strengthened?

• What can be done more effectively and/or efficiently in concert with others?

• What do you do on your campus that other colleges and universities also do? What aspects of your operations are distinctive to your campus or your mission—and what operations could be shared with other organizations without compromising your mission or the quality of the education you offer?

• With what other institutions of higher education would your institution want to be affiliated?

• What message would it send to students and other campus constituents that the leadership is willing to share costs and benefits with other institutions in order to enhance programming?
ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

CIC’s *Securing America’s Future: Workshops for Leaders of Independent Colleges and Universities* marked the final phase of an effort that included two earlier initiatives. The first initiative was *Securing America’s Future: The Power of Liberal Arts Education*, a public information campaign to highlight the effectiveness of study in the liberal arts and the contributions of the independent higher education sector. The second was a *Project on the Future of Independent Higher Education*, which brought together a steering committee of 22 CIC presidents to consider the challenges faced by the entire sector and fresh approaches for the future, in light of the particular qualities and missions of independent colleges and universities.

After two years of fact-finding and deliberation, the steering committee of the *Project on the Future* specifically called for a series of workshops around the country, viewing this step as “the most effective mobilization strategy.” The activities in 2016–2017 closely followed the plan the steering committee envisioned. This report draws upon both the formal presentations and informal exchanges that took place during the *Securing America’s Future* workshops.

CIC would like to thank the representatives of more than 120 colleges and universities who participated in the *Securing America’s Future* workshops. They provided most of the examples of innovation included in this report, through their comments at the workshops or in subsequent evaluation surveys. Whenever possible, all innovations have been independently confirmed using public sources. Any misstatements of fact or inadvertent mischaracterizations are the responsibility of CIC.

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ABOUT CIC

The **Council of Independent Colleges** (CIC) is an association of 767 nonprofit independent colleges and universities, state-based councils of independent colleges, and other higher education affiliates, that works to support college and university leadership, advance institutional excellence, and enhance public understanding of independent higher education’s contributions to society. CIC is the major national organization that focuses on services to leaders of independent colleges and universities and state-based councils. CIC offers conferences, seminars, publications, and other programs and services that help institutions improve educational quality, administrative and financial performance, student outcomes, and institutional visibility. It conducts the largest annual conferences of college and university presidents and of chief academic officers. Founded in 1956, CIC is headquartered at One Dupont Circle in Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.cic.edu.

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