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West Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Rough Road to Revival and Cooperation

For many reasons, the West Philadelphia/University of Pennsylvania case is one of the most notable examples of university-driven revitalization and university–community collaboration. In the mid-1960s, Penn began to develop strategies for improving campus life. This required expansion into previously residential and commercial strips, which led to a continuing need for negotiating a new relationship with surrounding communities. To that end, in the 1990s Penn developed both an infrastructure for community engagement and service learning and a parallel and somewhat complementary real estate development agenda. Together, these systems created one of the most celebrated examples of university-driven urban change and redevelopment. This chapter reviews the history of the university's efforts of the 1990s and early 2000s in order to place them in their proper context.

On Halloween Night in 1996, a purse snatcher fatally stabbed a University of Pennsylvania researcher, Vladimir Sled, on a West Philadelphia sidewalk.¹ In the weeks before Sled's murder, the university had been victimized by a rash of crimes, including the shooting of a student near campus.² Although crime was nothing new

to West Philadelphia by 1996, Sled's stabbing, in plain view of his girlfriend and twelve-year-old son, struck a painful chord with many West Philadelphia residents and Penn students, faculty, and staff. It exposed long-standing tensions and anxieties about the urban crime that many West Philadelphians had come to accept as their way of life.

At a meeting with concerned parents during the university's homecoming weekend a few weeks later, then Penn president Judith Rodin and then Philadelphia mayor Edward G. Rendell were booed off the stage as they tried to assuage the crowd's fears about crime in the area. Long before this meeting, Rodin and Rendell had known of West Philadelphia's problems and were developing a plan to improve public safety in the area. Nevertheless, they were given their marching orders to clean up the crime or lose students.

Several university staff and administrators interviewed for this study recalled how important that experience was for Rodin and the university. More than any other event, the stabbing served as a major turning point in Penn's resolve to seek solutions to the "West Philadelphia problem." A few days after the parent meeting, a group of area residents held a candlelight vigil in nearby Clark Park to commemorate the life of the slain researcher and to draw attention to the problem of neighborhood crime. The parent meeting and the vigil sparked the emergence of a new wave of activity collectively known now as the West Philadelphia Initiatives (WPI).

As a program for neighborhood revitalization, the WPI were not intended to be a comprehensive plan for the area. Their focus was on five main areas of activity: the fortification of public education, increased housing availability and quality, clean and safe streets, improved economic opportunity for residents, and increased and improved retail options.

According to study participants and other commentators on the Penn/West Philadelphia case, many of the improvements in University City and West Philadelphia were, in some manner, because of the university's efforts. What follows is a history of both Penn and its university-community relations. Placing the WPI in a longer trajectory of tensions and relations between university and community reveals how activity since 1996 represents the apex of work begun by

Penn president Gaylord Harnwell in the 1950s and how that work has been touched by every president of the university since.

Perhaps more than that of any other urban university, the work of the University of Pennsylvania has been well documented at both a local and a national level. However, much of this documentation has been initiated by the university itself.³ Many in the Penn community would regard Rodin's tenure as president as one of the most successful and distinguished because of her leadership of the WPI and the growth of the institution's prestige and standing.⁴ Additionally, Penn's Netter Center for Community Partnerships is internationally known as a model of university–urban engagement and service-learning curricula. To date, much of the writing about Penn's urban engagement and revitalization efforts has been by those closest to the work itself, with other accounts by admirers.

This chapter describes components of the West Philadelphia Initiatives, the greatest impacts of which, according to informants, have been improved conditions in University City and West Philadelphia. There is agreement on a certain amount of improvement, but informants were mixed on the methods, the types of improvements, and the impacts those improvements have had on their lives. The final section of this chapter presents informants' views of the university and the West Philadelphia Initiatives.

An Abbreviated “Urban” History of the University of Pennsylvania

The University of Pennsylvania holds a special place in the history of American higher education. Chartered in 1749 by Benjamin Franklin, it was the brainchild of Franklin along with civic, social, and commercial leaders who felt that Philadelphia needed a university in order to join the ranks of other world-class cities.⁵ In the mid-eighteenth century, Franklin authored a treatise on the need to train the territory's youth for practical arts. His famous essay, “A Proposal for the Education of the Youth of Pennsylvania [*sic*]” laid the groundwork not just for the University of Pennsylvania but for secular higher education in the United States.⁶ Franklin's essay led to

the founding of an academy that would later become the University of Pennsylvania in 1791. Unlike its colonial peers, Franklin's academy would focus on preparing men not for the clergy but for commerce and public service. Today, Penn's programs in business, medicine, nursing, dentistry, and law are considered some of the best in the nation and are among the oldest. While debate continues as to which U.S. college first made the move to a research orientation, Penn often claims this honor because of the age and prestige of its various professional schools. For most of its history, however, it remained a teaching college, graduating fewer than five hundred students in 1920.

Despite its long history, Penn has not always been regarded as a true rival to schools such as Harvard and Yale. Its admittance into the Ivy League athletic conference was a topic of great debate among the other universities in the league, based on its reputation as a "football school with lacking academics."⁷ Penn differed from many universities in that its various parts, until very recently, operated virtually autonomously, with only a loose affiliation to the larger institution. Moreover, its administration lacked structure and recognizable leadership. Penn did not have a university president until the inauguration of Thomas Sovereign Gates in 1930.⁸ Until then, for the most part, the board of trustees governed the affairs of the university and arguably failed to control the units that sought to assert their independence when necessary.⁹ John Terino describes the process by which the University of Pennsylvania pursued the status of research powerhouse equivalent to that of its respected peers and thereby became a greater beneficiary of the federal government's Cold War spending on science and technology.¹⁰ Its disorganized and divided engineering and science schools were in need not only of facilities and faculty but also of direction and mission. Finally, the institution found both with President Gaylord Harnwell, who led the university between 1953 and 1970. Under his leadership, Penn began working with city groups and leaders to construct the University City Science Center, an independent center of innovation that would provide Philadelphia and the universities located in West Philadelphia with a foothold in the new military-industrial complex. Harnwell is also credited with diversifying the university

and dramatically expanding its size, constructing ninety-three buildings during his tenure.

In the late nineteenth century, confronted with Philadelphia's dominance as an industrial power, Penn made the transition from a teaching college to a Humboldtian-model research institution. This identity was not an enormous leap given Penn's mission for and orientation toward its already prestigious professional schools. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, Penn was known as the "University of the State of Pennsylvania." Because it was regarded in the eighteenth century as a haven for Tory sympathizers, it was renamed and rechartered by the city fathers as a state affiliate, further indebting its graduates and faculty toward a mission that favored the city and the state.¹¹

Since its founding, the University of Pennsylvania has operated at three distinct sites. The first location was at Fourth and Chestnut Streets, in what is now known as "Society Hill" and is the oldest part of the city. Franklin himself worked, lived, and was buried a few short blocks away. The university moved to its second location at Ninth and Chestnut in 1901.¹² Finding itself again surrounded by teeming urban life, the university moved for a third and last time to the Almshouse Farm on the western banks of the Schuylkill River, then suburban farmland. This move represented a major shift in university life. Penn was now somewhat divorced from the ills of the city, although in a few short decades, the city would come to surround the West Philadelphia campus as it had in central Philadelphia.

Until 1930, Penn's board of trustees was the primary decision-making body of the university, with the deans of the respective colleges and the provost acting as day-to-day managers and chiefs of their respective units. Because it was not until the 1940s that Penn had a strong senior administration, its academic structure did not become fully integrated until Judith Rodin's tenure in the late 1990s.

Although Penn's professional schools flourished during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its undergraduate curriculum proved disconnected at best. For the better part of its history, Penn's academic reputation was largely regional. As previously mentioned, its admission into the Ivy League was highly contested by the already

admitted universities, whose argument was that Penn was more an athletic than an academic school. After agreeing to dismantle its nationally renowned athletic programs, Penn was admitted to the league.

As Philadelphia continued its industrialization into the twentieth century, a growing population of African Americans from the American South found their way into West Philadelphia. The deindustrialization that followed World War II set the city on a path toward population loss and urban poverty for the next sixty years. During that time, urban blight and decline found its way to the gates of the Penn campus. Immigration forever transformed the character of West Philadelphia's neighborhoods, which changed so fast and so dramatically that a plan, never carried out, was developed by the university trustees to relocate the campus to university-owned property in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. At virtually the same time, Penn saw itself develop into a true research university comparable to some of the nation's most elite and wealthy institutions. The philanthropy of the city's Protestant industrial elite proved to be one of its best assets as it sought to compete in a marketplace for university research.

Immediately following the decision to remain in West Philadelphia (rather than move to Valley Forge), the end of World War II, and the onset of the Cold War, a race began among the nation's elite research universities to garner a significant share of the federal government's largesse.¹³ Largely, Penn succeeded in leveraging its medical school and strengths in information technology and life sciences to spawn the University City Science Center and what has become the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania complex—consistently one of the nation's leading receivers of funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

A Brief History of University–Community Relations in West Philadelphia

The University of Pennsylvania's history is laced with tensions between its continual attempt to personify a romantic ideal of classical university education and the harsh realities of its industrial and later postindustrial surroundings. This history is marked with a few

moments of increased tension between Penn and certain demographic groups based on the notorious displacement of hundreds of African Americans during the period of Urban Renewal in the 1950s and 1960s and several high-profile incidents involving Penn students, faculty, and staff. In the establishment of the University City Science Center, approximately six hundred low-income and African American families were displaced. Unlike other institutions that used the Section 112 amendment of the Urban Renewal legislation of 1949 (which allowed colleges and universities to employ Urban Renewal policy for campus expansion), Penn leveraged that legislation to construct the nation's first inner-city urban research park. The legacy of this event is still experienced by many West Philadelphia residents. Two former residents of "Black Bottom," the area razed in the construction of the center, were interviewed for this study.

Many universities faced with similar challenges have taken different approaches. In her introduction to John Kromer and Lucy Kerman's report on the West Philadelphia Initiatives, former Penn president Judith Rodin outlined Penn's choices in the wake of the new urban crisis in West Philadelphia during the 1990s. Those choices included (1) engaging in community-oriented academic and service-oriented activities, (2) physically sequestering the campus with walls and gates, (3) relocating the campus, and (4) leveraging the university's resources to improve area conditions. These choices represented a higher-education version of Albert Hirschman's theory of exit, voice, and loyalty, where the first choice represents voice, the second and third represent exit, and the fourth represents loyalty.¹⁴

For many years, the best lens through which to view the university's contentious relations with West Philadelphia was Penn students. Through their often uncivic behavior, students revealed a naiveté regarding urban living and a contempt for and fear of their neighbors. For many years, they received maps of West Philadelphia as a part of their orientation. Those maps contained a black line that explicitly warned students not to travel beyond Fortieth Street (going west) because crime was much higher on the other side. This rationale was a subtext for the reality that the areas west of Fortieth Street were predominately African American. As one participant in this

study mentioned, one of the supermarkets located three blocks from the Penn campus, an Acme store, was nicknamed by Penn students “Black-Me” and avoided by students because of its clientele and overall quality.

Some West Philadelphia residents feel that because of Penn’s development of high-end retail amenities on and near its campus in the past fifteen years, retail amenities for residents of more limited means have diminished. One of the only remaining retail outlets near the campus that is still patronized by more African Americans than Penn students is a McDonald’s directly across the street from the Penn-developed supermarket and movie theater/bistro/nightclub on Fortieth Street. In 2008, the university completed a mixed-use development near this intersection, replacing an aging strip mall with the Radian, a 14-story building with 179 market-rate apartments and 40,000 square feet of retail.¹⁵ Original plans for this development called for the relocation of a long-standing McDonald’s restaurant at the corner of Fortieth and Walnut. Attempts to relocate the restaurant to nearby Market Street inspired the Neighbors against McPenetration group to file a suit to halt the construction of the new building. The group succeeded, and the McDonald’s remains in its original location. University representatives have stated that they still wish to help the restaurant to relocate and deny the implication that there are racist or nefarious intentions behind their assistance. In the university’s view, the intersection has changed dramatically, and at least in an architectural sense, a one-story, detached, fast food restaurant is no longer needed and does not maximize the utility of its current site. This was understood as the university’s blatant and overt racism toward the community. While students no longer receive maps as a part of orientation, the suggestion that West Philadelphia should be transformed to better service Penn students and faculty remains the dominant theme of the area’s revitalization efforts.¹⁶

Over the last forty years, Penn’s presidents devoted a great deal of attention to the issue of West Philadelphia. Informants with any opinion on this longer history all agree that the trend has been toward a gradual improvement in the university’s position on, and commitment to being an integral part of, West Philadelphia’s life

and economy. Each president since Gaylord Harnwell, who oversaw the university's expansion under Urban Renewal, spent some part of his or her tenure engaging the question and problem of West Philadelphia.

The university's stance on neighborhood change in West Philadelphia can at best be summarized as driven mostly by self-interest. That interest revolved around the desire to create a "connected and walkable" academic village embedded in an urban community.¹⁷ So far in the twenty-first century, the inter-institutional competition for top faculty, students, research funding and support, and alumni donations has led the University of Pennsylvania to reinvent itself through transformation of its campus and surrounding environs. The impetus for much of this activity began with a focus on on-campus public safety and increased neighborhood desirability. As later chapters discuss, many factions within the university were very interested in social justice and beneficial outreach. However, it is the "emergency" of enhancing the university's context that has dominated its efforts in the most recent era and perhaps well before.

In the words of a Penn administrator, the intention was to "stabilize the area for private investment." The framework for the university's efforts came directly from Ira Harkavy's research and community engagement and directives from the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, which has existed in some form since the 1980s. According to historical records, the university's commitment to West Philadelphia crystallized after proposals to relocate the university campus to its bucolic Valley Forge holdings failed in the 1940s.

In significant ways, the West Philadelphia Initiatives were organized to respond to calls by parents and students for a safer urban environment for this prestigious university community. One of the critics of the WPI offered the following:

It's as if we now have students who are the children of the scared suburbanites who think they can come to school here and be as safe at three in the morning as they are in the afternoon. This is not [a] completely enclosed community where they are free to do what they want.

Note that Penn is not the only institution of higher education in West Philadelphia. To its north sits Drexel University, previously the Drexel Institute of Technology, an institution that has grown in size and stature since its beginnings over one hundred and twenty years ago. Because of its relatively smaller endowment, Drexel has had its own issues with community tensions, but it has consistently refused and failed to respond in any meaningful way. To the west of Penn's campus sits the Restaurant School, now known as the Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College. And to the south sits the University of the Sciences of Philadelphia (USP), which was formerly known as the Philadelphia College for Pharmaceutical Sciences. Penn students receive the brunt of the criticism for West Philadelphia's town-gown tensions in large part because of their numbers and the extent to which West Philadelphia revolves around Penn's nearly 300 acres.¹⁸

Besides in physical size, these other schools are smaller than the juggernaut Penn in their employment bases and endowments, which collectively represent only a fraction of Penn's total. Despite this, the physical expansion of the University of Pennsylvania following World War II would provide the context for the often contentious relationship between the university and the West Philadelphia neighborhoods that surround its campus. At several points in that relationship, the university attempted to inspire neighborhood change and revitalization, or leveraged its political and economic influence to see that change happened. Those changes sometimes inspired mutually beneficial transformations but often did not.

The successes of the university's effort have been heralded by its own public relations infrastructure and a series of scholarly works citing the turnaround of West Philadelphia. These successes were not the first for the university; nor were they the beginning of the process. Every Penn president since the end of World War II in some way dealt with the challenges of administrating a major research university in a struggling inner city. The momentum was increased by succeeding presidents, culminating in the 2004 creation of the Penn Compact, a new institutional philosophy that extends Penn's mantra of engagement well beyond West Philadelphia.¹⁹

Penn's founding in what is now known as "Olde City Philadelphia" cast a mold for its relationship with its urban home that has always been somewhat uneasy. Like some of its Ivy League counterparts, Penn moved twice since its founding,²⁰ the rationale for each move that of placing the university in "an appropriate academic context." In 1887, nine years prior to Columbia's move from midtown Manhattan to its current home in Morningside Heights, Penn moved from Center City Philadelphia to its current home in West Philadelphia, which at that time was primarily farmland and sparsely populated by summer residents from the city's elite. However, the construction of several bridges linking Philadelphia's center to West Philadelphia created a boom in building across the Schuylkill River. Within fifty years, West Philadelphia closely resembled the bustling city the university had moved to avoid.

The years between 1930 and 1990 represented a time when the university attempted to fortify itself against the effects of deindustrialization and the movement of many poor and working-class families into West Philadelphia communities. The integration and subsequent racial tipping of several of those communities into predominantly African American neighborhoods furthered the university's resolve to redevelop its environs.

The Emergence of a New Paradigm of Community Engagement

In their summary of the scope and success of the West Philadelphia Initiatives, John Kromer and Lucy Kerman provide details of the university's planning and administration of the WPI and intended and measured outcomes. This section summarizes interviews with various university administrators and staff who were involved in the revitalization effort and provides context that Kromer and Kerman's report does not.

The University of Pennsylvania's changing stance toward its role in the urban revitalization of West Philadelphia can best be understood through the evolution of its philosophy of university–community relations. According to some commentators, Penn is one of the most

exciting universities in the country because of its civic engagement and university-led urban revitalization. The university's "success" has generated a particular self-perspective in the area of university-community relations, which has also developed from the other successes the institution has enjoyed in part because of its university-community work. The inauguration of Amy Gutmann as Penn's eighth president in 2004 led many to hope that Gutmann would continue the work of her predecessors in West Philadelphia. That hope was based on Gutmann's own intellectual biography, and preliminary statements about her plans for the university indicated that she intended to make the university's connections to its local and global contexts cornerstones of her presidency.²¹ Her presidency has built not only on the legacy of Judith Rodin, Penn's first alumna president, but also on that of the three Penn presidents—Sheldon Hackney, Martin Meyerson, and Gaylord Harnwell—who preceded Rodin. Since the Harnwell presidency, the University of Pennsylvania has seen the city of Philadelphia, its industry, population, and tax base crumble. The neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the West Philadelphia campus have been, and to some extent remain, among the most distressed in the city. The consequences of this distress have been many, both for the university and for its local context. Penn's geographic proximity to this decline has been perhaps its greatest motivation to engage the West Philadelphia community and commit to its redevelopment.

The success of the university and its president in community engagement has evolved into an ever-growing infrastructure and a mantra of revitalization. Much of this success, however, rests with a small core of individuals with resilient beliefs in democracy and the civic use of higher education. What follows is a discussion of Penn's university-community relations through the perspectives of several key informants regarding the university's structure and its internal political climate and the historical events that led to the West Philadelphia Initiatives.

The information here is based on seven interviews with Penn administrators and staff who are familiar with the university's inner workings and its efforts in West Philadelphia. These informants

represent various stakeholder groups. Each also possesses some understanding of who the institutional and extra-institutional stakeholders might be. I do not name these informants, as I agreed to provide them as much anonymity possible. In the case of Ira Harkavy, his role at the university and in its relations with West Philadelphia is too pivotal and central to my argument for him remain anonymous. As I will discuss later, this is both an asset and a liability. Some of the information in this chapter comes directly from confidential memos and other materials shared with me during these interviews.

An analysis of the university's stance toward civic/urban engagement must begin with an analysis of the university's resources in its university–community relations. The most central of these resources is the latest and most enduring of its kind, Penn's Netter Center for Community Partnerships. While the Netter Center is not the absolute authority for urban revitalization, it is a focal point for all of Penn's university–community relations, and its philosophy and staff have influenced the university's engagement with and efforts in West Philadelphia in virtually every way. It became clear through the interviews that the enterprise of university–community relations has been duplicated and fostered in so many different corners of the university that it is impossible for the Netter Center to control or even influence the work of various faculty members, groups, and administrative units. The university, too, recognizes that service-learning programs are not enough to combat the structural sources of urban decline.

Given the current and political nature of some of the qualitative data presented, it is useful to obscure the identities of all informants described in this section of the book with the notable exception of the Netter Center's director, Ira Harkavy. Three of the six anonymous informants are faculty members engaged in studying or connecting their academic interests to the university's efforts in West Philadelphia, or both.

Like many comparable institutions, Penn engaged in its university–community partnerships in order to respond to the demands of many vocal faculty and students, as well as community members who felt that some form of service and reparations were due to them in the

wake of the university's involvement in the Urban Renewal projects of the 1960s and 1970s. The rapid deindustrialization of Philadelphia that created blight in West Philadelphia and other areas of the city in many ways created a justification for the university's first large-scale attempts at comprehensive campus planning and real estate development. As some have noted, the expansion and development of the West Philadelphia campus was also driven by the university's desire to join the ranks of Stanford and MIT as part of the Cold War science-military complex.²²

Harkavy offers a possibly related reason for the university's engagement with its surrounding community—a desire to create a niche, both academic and other, that would distinguish it while making the campus a safer and more attractive place. The following quote from Harkavy firmly locates Penn's interests in West Philadelphia as not in the communities it now serves but in improving its standing within a larger realm of research universities.

Bill Whyte came [in the 1960s,] . . . and he was asked by the senior vice president under Sheldon [Hackney], how you beat Harvard. He said, “. . . you'll never beat Harvard by being Harvard. You'll always be Avis to their Hertz. You do what you, Ira [Harkavy], and . . . these other people are trying to do. You create an intellectual niche and you make that what makes you great, and it's something important. This is the way to do it.” What Bill was saying was about comparative advantage . . . and locational advantage, and intellectual advantage.²³

Harkavy explained that, after hearing Whyte's comments, many Penn leaders and supporters wanted to see the university leverage its resolution of the burgeoning crisis in West Philadelphia as a way of distinguishing the institution. Harkavy's remarks broaden the university's use of its mantra of enlightened self-interest. They refer not only to an attempt to create a safer, cleaner, and more attractive campus but to an attempt to engage in far more ambitious institution building.

There are and have been many people—faculty, administrators, and staff—pushing for Penn’s improvement. This is perhaps where the roots of the university’s philosophical rifts lie. While Penn’s recent successes would appear to have been the work of a great many groups and people functioning in relative harmony, there are actually several significant ideological and methodological divides present within the institution. These are not about *whether* to grow the institution but *how* to grow it and for what purposes.

In addition to Harkavy, two administrators were repeatedly mentioned in some of the interviews to characterize one of the differences in approach and philosophy. The first was John Fry, the university’s executive vice president between 1995 and 1999, who charted a course for aggressive, corporate-style campus development. During his tenure, he supervised many of the university’s auxiliary functions, such as campus planning and real estate services. Also mentioned in many of the interviews was Jack Shannon, Fry’s deputy and associate vice president for special projects. Shannon assisted Rodin and Fry in managing many of the university’s high-level and strategic civic relationships with West Philadelphia and the city of Philadelphia at large as well as the larger metropolitan region and its commercial sector.

Several of the informants interviewed made their opinions quite clear that Fry and Shannon were both dynamic and committed institution builders, virtually always in agreement with constituencies such as the Netter Center for Community Partnerships in the belief that a better West Philadelphia would translate into a better university. Shannon was often heard to repeat the mantra “We do well by doing good.” The Fry/Shannon camp was often at odds with the Harkavy camp on the end goal and the process that would lead to it. Harkavy summed up his relationship with Fry in this way:

We both wanted to improve Penn, but clearly my goals were much more related to improving the quality of life in all of West Philadelphia—democratic processes. I think John cared about the development of Penn and that was it. I don’t think he’d disagree with that. . . . I think the issue was that my issue

with them was never overt, and I think that the conflicts, if they existed, were over emphasis, style, and my critiquing things at times—that, well, not with John. I wouldn't do this with Jack [Shannon]. I would do it with John—things that he didn't agree with. We battled over the new school. He wanted it to be a private school initially. You know, there were issues.

And I don't know; I think that we had tensions over orientation and goals, but it was never an overt battle. . . . Our goals were different for what Penn should look like within West Philadelphia and within society. I'm not corporatist. I write against commodification. John believes strongly in the commercializing orientation . . . of the universities! He would call students customers. I thought that was blasphemy. He represents a strand within higher education today. This isn't anti-John; it's an orientation. When I was a kid, we used to say, "It's not the person; it's the system." He represents an orientation, goals that are legitimate and distinctly different from my personal goals, which are historically legitimate.

Harkavy's statement is an example of the corporate versus democratic ideal of higher education. It also points to the commodification of higher education and research versus the enterprise of higher learning and knowledge production for social purposes.²⁴ What makes the University of Pennsylvania such an interesting case is that the individuals involved have also been leaders in these issues nationally. In that way, then, Penn's experience becomes tied to broader disciplinary discourses on university leadership, development, university–community relations, curriculum development, and so on.

One dominant theme of virtually all of the interviews was an analysis of the Rodin presidency. Rodin's tenure saw a marked improvement in the tone of the university's relationship with its West Philadelphia neighbors, as well as with the city's political and civic leadership and its commercial constituencies. However, the credit for such improvement belongs, to one degree or another, to each Penn president since Martin Meyerson (1970–1981). It would appear that

every president, including Meyerson's predecessor Gaylord Harnwell (1953–1970), attempted to push the institution in the direction of engagement.

Earlier research reveals that Harnwell did attempt to make amends with Penn's West Philadelphia neighbors but not often in public view.²⁵ The sum of his attempts could not outweigh the perceived and real damage Penn and the Philadelphia Urban Redevelopment Authority were doing through the displacement of 666 families in the development of the University City Science Center in 1964.²⁶ However, where Meyerson and Hackney failed, Rodin succeeded and Gutmann has thrived. The credibility of the president's *impri-matur* is based not on his or her authority but on a relationship between community engagement and the university's academic mission. Gutmann set the tone for her approach to community engagement by starting her inauguration day at a local school wearing a T-shirt and jeans. While the West Philadelphia Initiatives did come to a quiet end, Gutmann's approach to engagement has been no less inclusive than Rodin's.

Sheldon Hackney (1981–1993), the university's sixth president, created the entity that would become the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, which Harkavy now directs in 2011. The Netter Center was originally located in the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) but reported directly to the president. There was an attempt in the beginning to have it also report to the provost, but the sitting provost's reluctance made this difficult. Harkavy explained that the center's original charge was to be "a university-wide structure designed to bring together the range of university resources to improve the quality of life at Penn and in West Philadelphia."

What Hackney created with the Netter Center was an institutional momentum for complete institutional change. It became clear from all seven interviews, however, that it took four presidencies; numerous student and faculty murders, muggings, rapes, and other nefarious incidents; and drops in admissions standards and selectivity for the university to take the issue of West Philadelphia seriously. Under Hackney, the center first took form in 1983 as the Office of Community Oriented Policy Studies (OCOPS). In the view of one

informant, this was a peripheral entity that reported directly to the president but lacked influence on campus.

Hackney provided some leverage that was more than symbolic. As the program became more popular with faculty, as more faculty and Ira [Harkavy] and Lee [Benson] invented that apt phrase “academically based community service,” . . . people began to say, “Well, this is a better way to do teaching, and I can even do research.” But especially teaching—making it more exciting, tapping into where kids are, and so forth. From roughly the mid-eighties up until the end of the early nineties, this thing was growing incrementally on campus.

This informant attributed a large part of this “thing” to the faculty’s obsession with research and research productivity. He dubs it the “publish, publish, publish, me, me, me, self-aggrandizing pathological faculty” mentality. The struggle to place OCOPS under a high university office and to create a bridge between it and the faculty is one that continues to this day. However, leading up to the West Philadelphia Initiatives, that struggle proved essential to raising the profile of public service within the university and to converting the most recalcitrant faculty, administrators, and students.

In many ways, the departure of a provost not long after Rodin’s arrival cleared the way for a new group to recast the OCOPS office as something much larger.²⁷ Unfortunately, Rodin’s arrival was also marked by a chain of incidents that included the death of one doctoral student (1994); the Sled murder in 1996; and a series of dramatic and deadly fires, robberies, and rapes. These incidents created a sense of “fed-up-ed-ness” on campus and in concerned parents, alumni, and trustees.

One informant who was in close contact with Rodin during these times described Rodin’s decision to make community engagement central to her presidency. Rodin, a West Philadelphia native, grew up in a solidly middle-class, predominantly Jewish neighborhood that had experienced a significant amount of decline since the 1960s.

Around 1995, there was mounting pressure from various groups on campus for the university to intervene to protect its faculty, staff, and, most important, students. It is not clear that all of these groups agreed on methods or ultimate goals, but what is clear is that the faculty was doing more than making decisions about whether to remain in the neighborhoods near campus. Many of Penn's best and brightest faculty and students were beginning to pursue academic posts and admissions at other institutions.

Despite these challenges, some critics suggested that it was inappropriate for the university to intervene in an issue that was beyond its purview. Many others were firmly convinced that the university was the only organization that could do something about the dangers the campus was facing, and would perhaps have to, in the interest of protecting its viability. The only consensus on what to do about West Philadelphia was that the resolution probably would not involve the vast majority of Penn faculty—particularly those in schools that lacked even a remote connection to public service and engagement in their missions or academic focus.

Given that a great deal of crime in the early 1990s was being perpetrated by young people, the improvement of the city's schools became a special focus of Penn's work in West Philadelphia. However, the Graduate School of Education was one of the last to fully embrace the new focus. Still, a number of faculty members saw their work with the distressed Philadelphia schools as an important step toward ending the violence and helplessness of disenfranchised youth in the surrounding West Philadelphia communities. This work did not deal just with the tremendous problem of distressed schools or public safety; it also created an opportunity for Penn to realize Benjamin Franklin's original goals for the university. Others, like Fry and Shannon, saw it as an opportunity to radically transform and enhance the campus and by extension to achieve much broader and ambitious corporate-style institutional management.

Even with a great deal of interest and demand for university engagement, the then newly installed provost, Stanley A. Chodorow, gave little academic merit to the work of community partnerships and fully expected that they would simply disappear in time. Harkavy

and his allies found that a large part of the work of converting faculty and others to their way of thinking involved “proselytizing,” not only on the importance of the partnerships themselves but on the use of knowledge and knowledge production for social purposes and of transforming their pedagogy toward that orientation.

One informant provided a great deal of historical perspective on this issue and offered the Wharton School and the Graduate School of Education as examples. The choice of these two schools is interesting in that both were, and still are to some extent, at different ends of the power and influence spectrum among Penn’s professional schools and colleges. Wharton, flush with resources, including a current \$125 million endowment, wields an inordinate amount of influence over campus affairs and the university’s direction. Its position on other university affairs aside, it does now and always has disdained and detached itself from academically based service learning, the university’s West Philadelphia Initiatives, and to some extent the city of Philadelphia at large.²⁸

The Graduate School of Education, which was originally opposed to the idea of civic engagement, has come a great distance in supporting the work of Harkavy and the Netter Center for Community Partnerships. This informant described his interactions with the dean of the Graduate School of Education:

My dean here . . . thought it was committing academic suicide . . . getting involved in this kind of stuff . . . or at least tenure suicide. In fact, in the Ed[ucation] School, in 1993, as I recall, when we did our strategic plan, I stood up and said if we don’t address West Philadelphia, we’re going to be sorry as an institution. In that entire report, that was the only statement about community involvement in the Ed School. . . . As I recall, Ira and [another professor] actually came to the dean and asked him to lead this whole initiative. . . . He didn’t see this as a very good thing. He was engulfed in a dilemma that the Ed School was badly in the red. It had no endowment to speak of, and no board of trustees or overseers, and couldn’t get involved, although I suspect that he would have

given this much greater energy if he had recognized it as something that was going to be developed into [what it has become].

This informant further theorized that many faculty members, particularly younger ones, found Ira's interest in their work to be an unnecessary encroachment and a possible threat to their academic freedom. In most cases, they ultimately became allies of the Netter Center once they ceased viewing it and its philosophy as endangering their intellectual fiefdoms. The Graduate School of Education now actively supports the Penn-assisted K-8 Penn-Alexander School, which has become one of the centerpieces of the University's success in West Philadelphia.

Almost simultaneously, as Rodin herself was increasingly convinced that community engagement would become a central project of her presidency, a newly appointed vice president for government and community relations devised a plan to change the Netter Center's relationship to higher administration. At a conference in California, a group of Penn faculty and administrators drafted a proposal to expand the Netter Center. They subsequently began a national search for a director while solidifying its strategic structural location within the university. Although there are some discrepancies from different voices in the Netter Center's history, there is agreement about moving OCOPS from a peripheral location in the School of Arts and Sciences and instituting direct reporting to the president and the vice president for government and community relations. There was also a new "soft report" to the provost that launched a new era in Penn-West Philadelphia relations. In these ways, the president's office's imprimatur was simultaneously broadened and strengthened, giving it the ability to leverage the president's status as head of the university to draw various university units and faculties into its efforts.

Two informants, including Harkavy, expressed the idea that community partnerships needed tethering to the president and the provost. Their view was that the relationship of the Netter Center to both continues to be critically important for creating greater

interest among the university's most important constituency—the faculty. Harkavy said, “It’s because structurally, the best thing is to be both [in] an academic and in an administrative capacity that could speak to the entire campus.” Having community partnerships connected to the provost not only provided the entire enterprise with a particular credibility with faculty; it also created a basis for maintaining the partnerships beyond some achievable, short-term goal, such as decreased crime and “elegantly” executed campus expansion. Harkavy’s perspective was that tying the university’s primary business—academics—to its civic engagements ensures that Penn’s commitment to the larger project of community development will be sustained for the foreseeable future.

Given Penn’s long and contentious history with West Philadelphia, it is easy to assume that the most ardent opposition to its community engagement efforts would have come from the communities themselves. Ironically, this was one of the least discussed topics in this set of interviews. Comments by community residents revealed that most were not and still are not privy to the complexity of the philosophical and practical rifts between university administrators; nor were they privy to the details of the West Philadelphia Initiatives.

As additional groups and stakeholders became interested and involved in urban revitalization in West Philadelphia, the Netter Center’s influence faded somewhat. Ira Harkavy had created a set of guiding principles for university civic engagement and service that eventually evolved into the West Philadelphia Initiatives themselves. What he could not have predicted was how various university-based stakeholders would adopt and in some cases adapt those principles for their own purposes. Following is a discussion of some of the university-based stakeholders and the ways they were connected to the philosophy and development of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships.

Without an involved and supportive central administration, the urban engagement project of the university would fail. At most, it would be what it was during and before the Hackney administration (1981–1993)—something that a few faculty members struggled to bring to the attention of the larger institution. Hackney’s support

and leverage set the stage for Rodin to take the Netter Center in new directions and to greater heights. In response to a question about the Netter Center's future, Harkavy said:

I could leave Penn, but I don't want to leave Penn. How many years would it take you to build up what I've tried here? One? Two? Three? Penn is the most exciting university in the country for my type of work. There's no one, no place like it. A part of it is because of me, but it's not just because of me. If it weren't for Sheldon [Hackney], weren't for Judy [Rodin], weren't for the people who work for them—and they shall remain nameless—it's me, colleagues, and also leadership, who I may not agree with on everything that they have done, but overall set the right direction.

As stated previously, the imprimatur of the university's chief academic officer proved to be as important as that of the university's chief executive. What was not explicitly discussed during these interviews was the role of scholarship in making the case to faculty—at Penn and beyond. In effect, Harkavy and his peers made the study of successful university–community relations an intellectual endeavor in and of itself. According to one professor:

Ira's great for Rodin, because she gives him that other piece, that other piece which is good for Penn's image. And he also was contributing, she recognized, [to] the intellectual contribution—the academically based community service in having these problem-focused classes and seminars. She might have seen it as kind of an image thing. And Ira had always said that one of the dangers of being housed in the office of the president, particularly at this university, an elite Ivy League place, is that you'd be co-opted, or the perception of co-optation would exist. If you're being turned into [or] your work is part of the big publicity apparatus, one could speculate that to some extent that's happened, and it's perhaps inevitable. We're good for Penn's public relations.

These remarks also highlight the critical importance of the president's connection to the Netter Center for Community Partnerships for the management of both the university's and the president's image. The relationship between the president and the Netter Center is mutually beneficial. Without it, the university—and the president—lack the ability to fend off criticisms that Penn has acted badly toward the community in one way or another. When compared to Columbia University's evolving debacle in Manhattanville, Penn appears to have many assets that Columbia lacks.²⁹

During Rodin's tenure, all of the auxiliary departments related to the university's physical infrastructure—for campus planning, design, construction, real estate development, physical plant and maintenance, and landscaping—were brought together in the same office. The culture of each department was reoriented to the comprehensive campus plan, to greater public participation in planning and design, to Harkavy's five "guiding principles" for improving both Penn and West Philadelphia, and to the work and operations of the other departments in this reorganization. Harkavy's principles—clean and safe streets, quality housing, economic opportunity, public education improvement, and increased retail options—provided structure to the university's efforts as well as avenues of involvement for various university units and constituencies. In this way, these auxiliary departments were able to garner greater financial and administrative support from the university. They were also able to leverage a particular level of legitimacy and social capital that they had not been able to wield before.

As yet unmentioned are constituencies that may be as critically important to the success of university–community relations and the shifts in institutional culture that facilitate them. These are the alumni, trustees, and financial supporters. Obviously these groups are not mutually exclusive, and the most prominent members of each constituency may serve the university in all three ways. They not only support the president but are also the most able to challenge him or her should they disagree with the president's agenda.

At Penn, this cultural shift within the university did not occur only in its administrative units but in the academic units as well. The

“publish-or-perish” paradigm in the past ruled and continues to rule Penn’s academic culture. What Penn did that few other institutions have done is make service learning appealing to academic departments that typically do not engage in such work. Harkavy and his academic colleagues created a credible argument, buttressed by their interest in action research and their collaborations with others such as Whyte, that service learning can be academically based. Harkavy’s argument offered to revolutionize teaching as well as research. Without changing university policies on tenure and promotion, advocates of this type of research made service learning palatable to faculty who were ideologically aligned with this advocacy but more concerned with their own job prospects than with the challenges facing the institution—and, more important, the communities beyond campus.

The strongest motivating factor for many of the constituencies mentioned in this section was not a desire simply to improve the campus as an end unto itself. In Penn’s case, the public safety crisis of the early to mid-1990s trumped the institution’s historical instinct to engage in institution building in an attempt to “beat Harvard.” In this case, that notion simply wasn’t enough to spur such a significant proportion of the institution’s disparate constituencies to action. Each informant I interviewed who had been affiliated with Penn for more than five years had a crime-related horror story of some kind, including being caught in the midst of a shootout. The crime factor was important because it discouraged students from active participation in city life. Just as important, it dampened the spirit of the campus.

An important lesson from the Penn case is that any successful attempt to engage urban communities requires a nonpresidential advocate and manager. Harkavy has remained the best person for the job at Penn because of his work in West Philadelphia as a student and his sustained friendships with numerous members of the West Philadelphia community. He has brought to the position legitimacy and energy, from which the university has benefited handsomely. One informant said this about Harkavy and his job:

Hey, it’s vital to your existence. He’s been that way. He has alliances out the kazoo—churches, business, and political

organizations—and he just knows how to work. . . . His contacts and his understanding and his understanding of university culture—the social situation, the social forces—really ha[ve] credibility. He has credibility because he delivers on his promises. And it's the charisma—and he is [charismatic]—and I don't necessarily mean that when you're in a room, everyone gravitates towards him, but he does have a way of mobilizing people around ideas.

The process of recruiting and converting faculty from wary careerists to community advocates/pedagogical revolutionaries is tough and often thankless work. Harkavy's ability to do this had much to do with where faculty members were intellectually located within the university and how their bodies of work spoke for them, both on campus and beyond. He was clear that his standing as an academic had much to do with the strength and level of support he received from the administrator he primarily reported to, the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS). At Penn, this is one of the largest and most powerful schools. Its former dean and former chair of the sociology department, Sam Preston, has been allied with Harkavy and his work in West Philadelphia almost from the start. His appointment as dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, his individual reputation as a scholar and colleague, and his relationship to Harkavy only enhanced the Netter Center's legitimacy and its appeal to a wider faculty audience.

The Netter Center's success confronts the institution with one specific and tremendous challenge, according to this informant:

I keep telling him [Harkavy], "Cross streets in Philadelphia very carefully, Ira. If you get killed, the gig's up. We're out of business." My worry about this [institutional charisma, beyond Harkavy] is that I don't think we have it. I think that that's acknowledged. They don't want to hear it, maybe. There's nobody in the wings that can lead this thing, in my judgment.

The Netter Center for Community Partnerships and Ira Harkavy himself have enjoyed the support of a cast of characters, including those from the highest levels within the university. As the administration changed hands from Rodin to Gutmann in 2004, a number of the Netter Center's most ardent supporters (and their counterparts on what remains of the John Fry/profit-oriented side of the issue) departed. As with every major administrative transition, the Netter Center finds itself vying for position among other priorities and interests. Fortunately, the success of the past fifteen years, as reported by my informants in this chapter, suggests that the rationale for sustaining the West Philadelphia project into the near future remains sound.

The interviews in this chapter represent only a cursory examination of the inner workings of the university. What this analysis may offer is a clear way of identifying the philosophical differences that exist between factions in the university's leadership, faculty, and staff. Given the strength of Penn's corporate orientation, there is a shared impression among my informants here that perhaps the work of university–community relations can be co-opted. The university president lends the work his or her imprimatur but in return may require the project's cooperation or deployment for other purposes. In response to my question of whether or not Harkavy feels deployed, he says, "I try to avoid being deployed. There are times when I know that our good work allows certain things to happen. I also know that because we allow certain things to happen, our good work grows and develops, and we're able to do better things."

Harkavy clearly sees this as "acceptable compromises" made in the name of the greater good of the university and the West Philadelphia community. One informant offered a contrasting view, in which co-optation may be unavoidable but much easier to agree to if compromises have already been struck. However, the compromises themselves may not always yield what had been hoped from them. The following statement from Harkavy demonstrates how his optimism may blind him to the realities of opportunities for co-optation and acquiescence.

My sense is that they think that they understand where we're situated. They understand it's an institution. They understand what we stand for. They understand what Penn is standing more and more for. And they also understand that often at times we are utilized as somewhat of a cover, but we are also able to play and do things the next day.

Harkavy and other informants were also clear that the Netter Center's philosophy and work are threatened not only by competing interests from without but by mission creep from within. The compromises that Harkavy and his staff make to maintain the center's position within the university consistently challenge their ability to steer university–community partnerships away from the university's corporate interests. On that subject, Harkavy was resolute in stating that he is willing to make some compromises to reach the goal of an institution that is ruled by a democratic ideology. Had he not been willing to make compromises on where the center would be located, the reporting structure that governs it, and the nature of its work, it probably would have died long before Rodin arrived on campus. Harkavy himself admits that the challenge is to remain consistently focused on the best interests of both the target communities and the university and to organize the Netter Center's work so that the compromises he is forced to make on its behalf do not outweigh that work.

One last potential weakness in this model is that the university partnerships—writ large—may become so ubiquitous that accountability will suffer. Versions of Harkavy's West Philadelphia model of academically based service learning are now operating in virtually every university academic and administrative unit in some form or fashion. More important, they now work alongside and, at some points, in opposition to the Netter Center. Rodin provided the center with a place of honor that made the other efforts peripheral even if they actually had greater fiscal or staff resources. In my interview with Harkavy, he gave Rodin a great deal of credit and praise for what Penn accomplished in the ten years between her inauguration and her departure.

With Rodin gone and Gutmann, a nonnative Philadelphian now at the helm, a good deal of work will have to be done to replicate what Rodin and Harkavy created together. An even larger challenge is maintaining Penn's institutional momentum in various areas. While Harkavy's optimism and dedication to the project are inspiring, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to find a successor who can sustain this momentum for very long. This presents Penn and other institutions seeking to duplicate Penn's success with a problem. Virtually all of the things that the university was able to do in the past ten years were related to the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, its charismatic director, and the goodwill that he has banked on behalf of the Netter Center, which is simultaneously his and Penn's. In the end, the center's continued success will depend on its ability to institutionalize its philosophy while negotiating its co-existence with competing interests within and beyond the university.

The Ascendance of University-Driven Real Estate Development

Under Rodin's leadership, the university's Real Estate Services office became spatially and operationally attached to the Campus Planning, University Architect, Facilities Management, and Development Offices. I conducted a structured interview with members of the Real Estate Services team along with a Penn staff member who was intimately involved in campus planning and real estate investing. My analysis here is informed by both this interview and other interviews that overlapped with this subject. The excerpts that follow focus on two aspects of the university's real estate development strategy. The primary interest is in the pressures that influence this strategy and the methods by which the strategic goals are reached.

More important than profit generation, the focus of the University Architect, the Campus Planning and Physical Plant staffs, and Real Estate Services is to serve the university's various constituencies. The Penn faculty is a key constituency. As stated elsewhere in this book, competition for talented faculty is intense among elite

schools. Providing them with the necessary facilities and amenities is critical in these contests. One interviewee noted:

As [the] faculty change—I hate to call them acquisitions—but [consider] this professor from Hopkins, Dr. Smith [name changed]. What if I need more space, and that contradicts what I told you I needed two years ago? That’s exactly what happened with both Dr. Smith and [Dr.] Johnson. Smith was hired, and they basically said, “Congratulations, here are your terms and conditions.” And then they said, “Oh gosh, where are we gonna house him?” After he had signed and accepted the letter, we got this call: “What can we do?” What about this Translational Research building? He opened [his lab] last week. He moved right in. His vision is when we get the Skircanage, which is our bioengineering building that’s up on the engineering campus, built. It’s a little tiny thing that’s right in there. That’s all engineering buildings.

I asked about how often Penn “acquires” faculty. Such an enterprise would mean that the university possesses a storehouse of properties that it saves for just such situations.

HFE: Did you own it the whole time? Is it something that you acquired, too?

Penn staffer: We didn’t know why we acquired it; we just acquired it. It was a former machine-equipment repair building—very heavy industrial use for Westinghouse. They remanufactured engines, electric motors, and transformers. So we bought the building in 1999, really without too much strategy. We just figured, “You know what? We’re going to need it.”

HFE: How much land banking do you do?

Penn staffer: We do a lot. We’re constantly looking. Look at the history, the Post Office [Annex]. We have tried for almost

thirty-five years to acquire that property. I can go back. I inherited this box of correspondence. I should send it to the archives. For thirty-five years, Penn has communicated with the Post Office about acquiring this tract of land that's south of Walnut. It's fourteen acres. It's just a natural land-banking growth. We finally got the deal done. It's pure land banking—because Penn grows about fifty acres every seventy-five years.

The Post Office Annex to which the staff member referred was transferred to the university in 2005 by the U.S. Post Office, which relocated much of its mail distribution from Thirtieth, Market, and Chestnut Streets to a new facility in southwest Philadelphia. The transfer allowed Penn to put in a bid to the city for the parcels of the first post office site. In the months that followed the announcement of the land transfer, a series of meetings were held to garner Penn community feedback on proposed plans for an eastward campus expansion. The university's intentions are to do more than simply enlarge the campus; the expansion will also allow it to face the central business district by having campus buildings and facilities sit along the banks of the Schuylkill River.

One of my key interests in this meeting was to understand how planning decisions are made and how they interface with the WPI. Despite the existence of a comprehensive long-term plan for university growth and development, long-term goals are not explicitly tied to enrollment or space needs projections.

HFE: So, how much land banking happens with the individual parcels outside (west and north)?

Penn staffer: We own properties here and there [*pointing at map on a conference room table*]. And we acquired, I mean, I acquired—the department acquired—a property at Fortieth and Pine, for example. It was an old nursing home. It was disreputable and a really terrible building. We just needed it. We wanted the indigent old-timers that lived there to go somewhere else, because we wanted the operator, who was

a very, you know—[he] should have been in jail. We wanted him out. So we bought the building and got them out and are going to redevelop the building. It's a little site. It's a one-acre site. We're doing little things.

HFE: You're going to redevelop it for Penn student housing? Or for what?

Penn staffer: Not sure. Not sure. It could be a lot of things. It could be student housing.

In a related vein, this staffer explained that the eastward expansion and the land-banking activities *are* in some ways tied to master campus plans and the university's interest in revitalizing West Philadelphia.

We repeat the plan like we're saying the pledge of allegiance. This is what we're trying to do. This is not about coming out and building a new thing for a university. This is about economic development. It's about city building. It's about creating connectivity between Center City and the university. It's about being a good neighbor. It's about, you know, creating spaces for our own people—meaning the Dr. Smiths or Dr. Johnsons [names changed] or whatever the future [is] of unnamed doctors doing research in these buildings.

It is also about staying competitive with other top research universities. The “acquisition” of “Dr. Smith” from Hopkins was significant on many levels. Hopkins and Penn maintain an intense but friendly rivalry for being named top university in National Institutes of Health (NIH) research funding. The hiring away of a highly talented researcher directly from Hopkins puts Penn in the lead. As important as NIH ranking is, research commercialization and potential royalties also matter; other researchers may follow the recruited researcher. On this point, the staffer remarked:

We're a support system for this institution. Fundamentally, this is a real estate deal. But it's also called a "build to suit." [In] one of the things that I'm particularly in charge of . . . [Dr. Smith] is also a part of the story."

He says to people, when he goes out to talk about it, "I had courage; I moved from my building, which is in the basement of one of our hospitals—I moved my lab and my people, taking my intellectual capacity to this eastern location. I've got a great state-of-the-art lab. I'm part of the university's eastward momentum. I'm helping to improve the quality of life over here." And frankly, if he splits on us, we could fill that space in a heartbeat.

The goal here is not to ensure that top faculty like "Dr. Smith" remain at Penn. I understand the staffer's remarks to mean that the larger goal is to be ready to accommodate a scientist of his caliber on short notice. So, according to Terino's assessment, Penn and its perpetual effort to chase preeminence among top-tier schools in research productivity started during the Cold War and may continue today.³⁰ An example of how Penn modeled this was discussed by my informant:

Remember [at] MIT, Millennium Pharmaceutical went from a nothing idea in a researcher over at Whitehead Institute in his lab to being a one-million-square-foot tenant in buildings that MIT owns. And that happened in fifteen years. That could happen here. The Center for Technology Transfer is moving people out. When the Center for Technology Transfer has a success, where do those people go? Cambridge; Menlo Park; Ann Arbor, Michigan; North Carolina; San Diego. They're not here. . . . What we need to do is create an investment environment, and that's what we hope to do out here on fourteen acres where that can happen.

Some of the university's real estate development activities are focused on students and on the end goals of the West Philadelphia

Initiatives themselves. The Penn staffer I spoke with was intimately involved in the Fresh Grocer complex development. Of course, the university does not want to lose money on its investment, but it is able to take risks as a technically tax-exempt institution that a private investor or developer cannot. Moreover, a great deal of the university leadership's urgency may have had something to do with a desire to silence the critics and constituent groups that inspired Penn to engage in the WPI. A confidential draft memo on the West Philadelphia Initiatives from 1995 spoke specifically to the need for a supermarket. On that topic, the staffer shared the following:

Penn staffer: Well, with the Fresh Grocer, we had a whole community infrastructure in place to say, "Penn has set out to improve Fortieth Street, and this is the centerpiece of our Fortieth Street revitalization strategy." We have some interesting things we own, and it's becoming more widely known. We bought a bunch of really sleazy businesses on the upper Fortieth Street. I call it the upper Fortieth Street. You know, it's between Chestnut, Walnut, or Chestnut to Ludlow and Sansom and Fortieth Street. And these were some crack houses and, you know, a really scary kind of neighborhood business that needed to be [closed down]. Penn was in a hurry.

HFE: Why?

Penn staffer: We had to change the world. If you're going to change the world, you can't [wait].

HFE: But there was a supermarket down the street—?

Penn staffer: It was despicable and very dangerous.

HFE: Was that the rush—to give students another option?

Penn staffer: We had a five-point plan. We needed—you've got Ira's book; you've seen our five-point plan. [1] clean and

safe, [2] neighborhood retail and commercial, [3] housing—you know, put into place an urban design plan that included all of the furniture and street trees and make Penn a good neighbor. Make our buildings better. Make them urban. That was the five-point plan, and I just skipped over chapters and chapters of the book. You know, each of those really had a strategy. But when we did the Fresh Grocer, and the garage, we adhered to those principles, and that was all about getting neighborhood commercial—the classic neighborhood commercial—in the grocery store. You can't have a good residential quality if you don't have a good grocery store, and we put our bucks on the line to build a grocery store.

The urgent tone of the WPI was nested in Ira Harkavy's language and ideas, but the initiatives were being used to rationalize the mode and speed of the university's real estate development efforts. At no point in this, or any other interview, did this staffer or anyone else besides Harkavy speak about an evolution in the university's mission. Instead, there was much implied about an evolving culture of a once sleepy but great Ivy League research university on a quest to use the crisis of West Philadelphia to reinvigorate its most recalcitrant constituencies. The enhancement of Penn as a research university, as a community partner, and as a center for prestige and excellence was somehow tied to the fate of West Philadelphia. Penn leadership could marshal its constituencies around this cause for many reasons. As for residents of West Philadelphia, or staff who spend a great deal of time there, improvements in retail amenities, public safety, and so forth benefited them directly through improved services and options and through their connection to an institution in many ways on an upward swing.

Given Penn's historically contentious relationship with its West Philadelphia neighbors, the question remains why none of this activity generated more protests or resistance. As I would find out from interviews with area residents, there actually was a great deal of discontent in West Philadelphia. The Real Estate Services Office and others in the Penn administration had learned well from history and

approached the WPI with its community relations infrastructure ready to engage irritated constituencies and support development in whatever ways possible.

The staffer I spoke to offered an apt analogy to explain how the university went about purchasing a set of storefront properties along Fortieth Street as a part of its corridor revitalization program:

If the university tried to do it, we would fail. And the reason for that is because you're fighting thirty or forty years of animosity. I say it's like a big dog in a small room. The dog is a friendly dog. He really wants to please, but he's a big dog. And he comes in the room and his tails wags and he knocks over the lamp and he doesn't mean to. And everyone around here wants to do the right thing; it's just [that], institutionally, when you get into community development, you can't help yourself.

Like many universities, Penn has learned that its real estate acquisition and development strategy must involve third parties. In most cases, the third parties are capable and legitimate developers, community development corporations, banks, and others with an interest in the success of a particular project or target area. In other cases, they may be chosen because of their shared identities or long-term history with property occupants or sellers. This is particularly true when race is involved. An African American developer may be chosen simply because he or she is seen as being able to reduce any resistance the university (and its partners) might encounter. Still, the benefits of revitalization for long-term residents are there, even if those residents are resistant simply because a project is being driven or supported by the university. One informant explained:

We're seeing portfolios turn over, where investors that have owned properties for thirty, forty, fifty years are now selling the family assets, and they're getting sixty to seventy-five thousand bucks a unit. I think that's a great thing. I can see already, in the foreground, gentrification might become an

issue. But you take things in stride. You take things in order. And Philadelphia has a long, long way to [go] before this becomes—including almost a million empty homes, a million homes and land that used to accommodate a million people—poof, all gone. So we've got a long, long way to go. But, you know, we've changed the world, and now the market forces are working in our favor.

The ideologies of the corporate and service-oriented faces of the University of Pennsylvania may not be as operationally divided as individuals who are involved may like to think. A contradictory, symbiotic relationship exists between the two that involves many more actors and constituent groups (or those acting in their stead) than I could interview. The West Philadelphia Initiatives took shape with significant contributions from the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, but they did not fit into Penn's real estate development strategy. As a planning exercise, the West Philadelphia Initiatives exposed the ideological divides within the university, and their impacts are yet unfolding.

