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“SAVIORS OF OUR CITIES”

TWENTY FIVE URBAN COLLEGES NOTED FOR POSITIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFIT TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

Dr. Evan Dobbelle, president of the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), has released a list of 25 “best-neighbor” urban colleges and universities that, because of their strong positive contribution of careful strategic planning and thoughtful use of resources, have dramatically strengthened the economy and quality of life of their neighboring communities and have become “Saviors of Our Cities.”

The economic impact of institutions on smaller, familiar “college towns” has long been recognized, but the current reality is that many major cities are now dependent on the economic influence and impact of their colleges. Today there are numerous cities where the decisions made by these institutions play the major role in the economic and social health of their community. Dobbelle noted, “In New England alone there are 270 colleges and universities in those six states that employ 250,000, including 38,000 faculty, and have annual budgets of \$20 billion, exclusive of capitol construction, which approached \$1 billion last year. The economic multipliers are huge.”

The “Saviors of Our Cities” list is composed of 25 academic institutions that are exemplary examples of community revitalization and cultural renewal, economic drivers of the local economy, advocates of community service and urban developers, both commercially as well as in housing. They are:

1. University of Southern California - Los Angeles, California
2. University of Pennsylvania - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
3. University of Dayton – Dayton, Ohio
4. IUPUI – Indianapolis, Indiana
5. Rhode Island School of Design – Providence, Rhode Island
6. Case-Western University – Cleveland, Ohio
7. Clark University - Worcester, Massachusetts
8. Virginia Commonwealth University – Richmond, Virginia
9. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee – Milwaukee, Wisconsin
10. Emerson College – Boston, Massachusetts
11. Trinity College – Hartford, Connecticut
12. University of Chicago – Chicago, Illinois
13. Mercer University - Macon, Georgia
14. Middlesex Community College – Lowell, Massachusetts

15. George Washington University - Washington, DC
16. Carnegie-Mellon University – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
17. Portland State University – Portland, Oregon
18. University of Pittsburgh – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
19. College of Charleston – Charleston, South Carolina
20. Springfield College – Springfield, Massachusetts
21. Emory University - Atlanta, Georgia
22. Union College – Schenectady, New York
23. University of Missouri – Kansas City – Kansas City, Missouri
24. Miami-Dade College – Miami, Florida
25. Creighton University – Omaha, Nebraska

These 25 urban institutions, some nationally well known and others less so, were all found to have led the way in instituting policies, which have not only had positive results on their campuses, but also produce a major beneficial impact in the cities they call home.

Dobelle said, “The extraordinary efforts of these and other colleges have made higher education one of the great growth industries in America and have given a sense of confidence and hope as well as stability to cities that would otherwise be struggling in a world of mergers, downsizing and global outsourcing that has eroded the traditional urban economic base.”

Many other institutions also have a very positive impact on their communities, Dobelle noted, and hopefully the focus on a range of actions taken by colleges and universities of various sizes, both public and private, will encourage others to take additional steps. “This list is designed to recognize 25 outstanding institutions that represent hundreds of others who every day become more and more important by providing stability in every social indices in cities across America,” he said.

Inclusion on the list is based on ten (10) criteria that have been designed to accommodate scale in terms of the size of the institution in geography, student population, endowment and with the population of their immediate neighborhood or city. Some, by necessity, include subjective impressions based on 20 years of professional experience. The criteria are:

1. The institution’s longstanding involvement with their urban community.
2. The real dollars invested through their foundations and annual budgets.
3. Their catalyst effect on additional partners for social and economic change.
4. Their presence felt from their payroll, research and purchasing power.
5. Faculty and student involvement in community service.

6. Their continued sustainability of neighborhood initiatives that in many ways have supplanted government programs.
7. The marked difference it has made on local student access and affordability to attend college through K-12 partnerships.
8. The qualitative esprit of the institution in its engagement.
9. The quantifiable increase in positive recognition of the institution as demonstrated by a rise in applications by prospective students and resources raised through renewed alumni giving becoming available for community projects and local scholarships.
10. Recognition of the impact of these institutions within their communities gathered from interviews with educators and public officials throughout the country.

Dobelle, an expert in the field of Higher Education and Cities, was recognized as New Englander of the Year in 1999 for his efforts leading Trinity College in Hartford and widely praised that year for his “call to arms” in a National Press Club speech in Washington entitled “Stepping Down From The Ivory Tower.” A former president at four different higher education institutions, he is a longtime Executive Board member of the National Campus Compact, a frequent speaker and recipient of numerous awards and Honorary Degrees.