

# Co-ops and the University: Negotiating the Fragile Terrain

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# The Democracy Collaborative

Promoting innovations to rebuild community wealth and enhance vital and equitable local economies

## Field Building

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To create a “Community Wealth” movement:

- C-W.org
- CWB Roundtable
- Learning/Action Lab
- Policy Development
- Key Partnerships
- Conferences

## Research

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Build knowledge for the field:

- Reports
- Articles
- Case Studies
- Books
- Metrics & Indicators

## Advisory

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Develop community wealth building strategies in local communities (with City governments, local philanthropy, anchors):

- Cleveland, OH
- Atlanta, GA
- Washington, DC
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Amarillo, TX
- Jacksonville, FL
- New Orleans, LA

## Next System

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Expand network of scholars & activists:

- Conferences (Harvard, MIT)
- Commissioned Research
- Next System Book

# COMMUNITY-WEALTH.ORG


## THE ROAD HALF TRAVELED

**UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT at a CROSSROADS**

RITA AXELROTH HODGES and STEVE DUBB  
Foreword by CHARLES RUTHEISER

## RAISING STUDENT VOICES

Student Action for University Community Investment




## HOSPITALS BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Embracing the anchor mission

by David Zuckerman  
with contributions from Holly Jo Sparks, Steve Dobb, and Ted Howard

The Democracy Collaborative at the University of Maryland  
March 2013



## THE ANCHOR MISSION

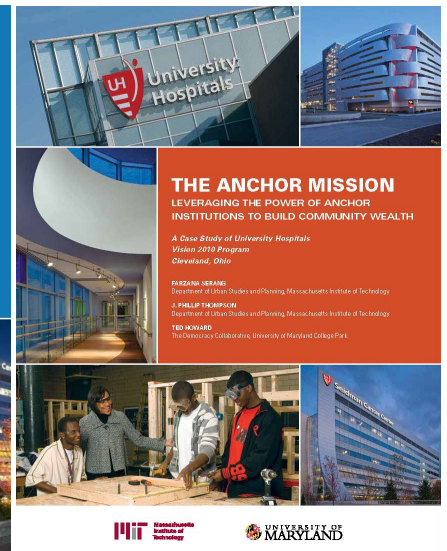
LEVERAGING THE POWER OF ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS TO BUILD COMMUNITY WEALTH

A Case Study of University Hospitals  
Vision 2010 Program  
Cleveland, Ohio

FRIZAN SHERMAN  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

J. PAUL FERGUSON  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

TED HOWARD  
The Democracy Collaborative, University of Maryland College Park




**MIT** Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**

## THE ANCHOR DASHBOARD

Aligning Institutional Practice to Meet Low-Income Community Needs

August 2013  
The Democracy Collaborative at the University of Maryland



DEMOCRACY COLLABORATIVE WORKING PAPER

### What Then Can I Do?

Ten ways to democratize the economy  
Gar Alperovitz and Keane Bhatt

The richest 400 Americans now own more wealth than the bottom 180 million taken together. The political system is in deadlock. Social and economic pain continue to grow. Environmental devastation and global warming present growing challenges. Is there any path toward a more democratic, equal and ecologically sustainable society? What can one person do?

In fact, there is a great deal one person working with others can do. Experiments across the country already focus on concrete actions that point toward a larger vision of long-term systemic change—especially the development of alternative economic institutions. Practical problem-solving activities on Main Streets across the country have begun to lay down the elements and principles of what might one day become the direction of a new system—one centered around building egalitarian wealth, nurturing democracy and community life, avoiding climate catastrophe and fostering liberty through greater economic security and free time.

Margaret Mead famously observed: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Some of the ten steps described below may be too big for one person to take on in isolation, but many are exactly the right size for a small and thoughtful group committed to building a new economy, restoring democracy and displacing corporate power.


As the history of the civil rights movement, women’s movement, and gay-liberation movement ought to remind us, it’s precisely actions of this sort at the local level that have triggered the seismic shifts of progressive change in American history.

Gar Alperovitz, Lionel R. Bauman Professor of Political Economy at the University of Maryland, and co-founder of the Democracy Collaborative, is the author of *War, No War! Or Don't Forget! Talk About It: Near American Revolution*. Keane Bhatt is a Community Development Associate at the Democracy Collaborative.




## WORKER COOPERATIVES: PATHWAYS TO SCALE

Hilary Abell



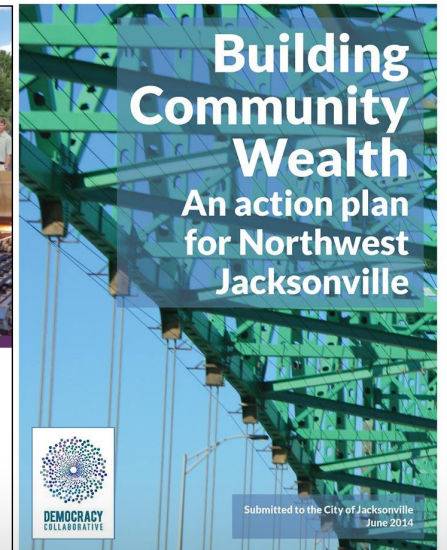
The Democracy Collaborative  
June 2016



## Building Community Wealth

### An action plan for Northwest Jacksonville

Submitted to the City of Jacksonville  
June 2014



**DEMOCRACY COLLABORATIVE**



# Anchor Mission

*“To consciously apply their place-based economic power, in combination with their human and intellectual resources, to better the long-term welfare of the communities in which they reside.”*

Hodges and Dubb, *The Road Half Traveled*

# Key Concept: Community Engagement

*“Communities and universities need each other. The university cannot thrive without the full support of its community and the community can’t thrive without the full engagement of its university.*

*The future of each is tied to the other. This is the foundation on which partnership is built.”*

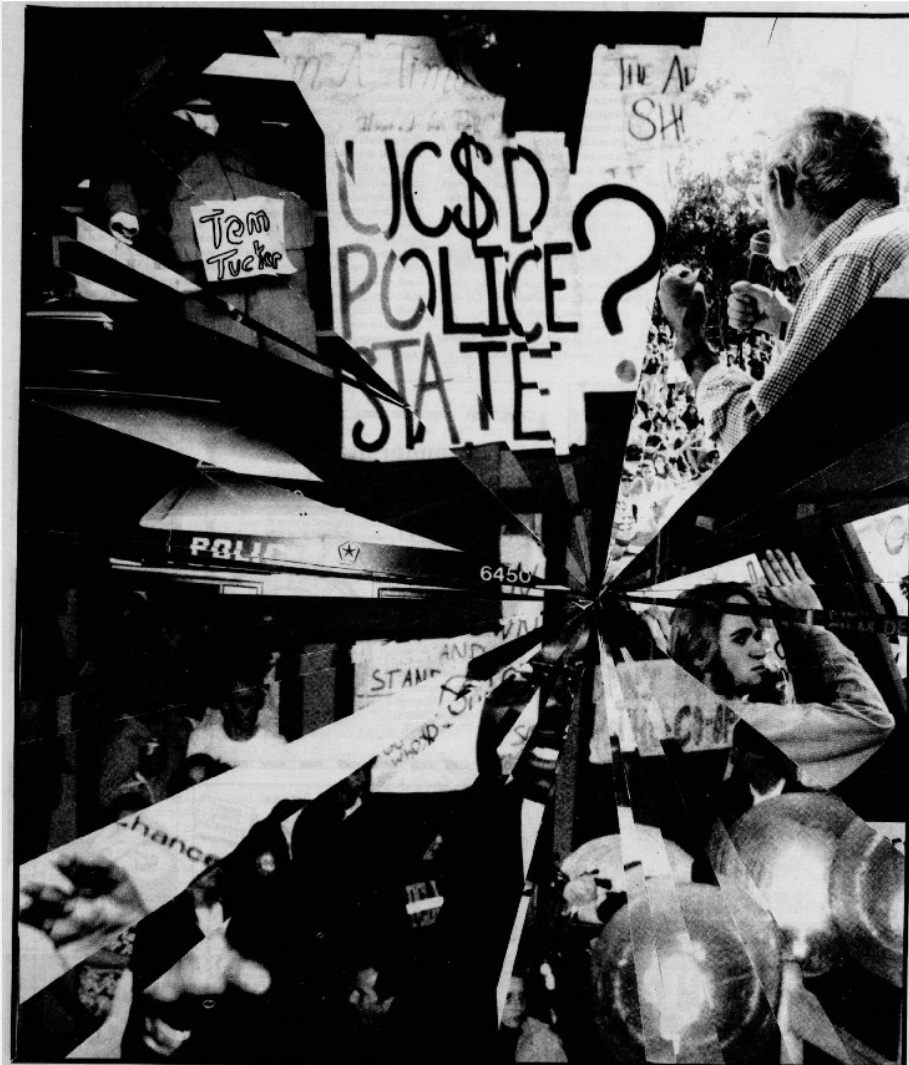
Jim Votruba  
President Emeritus  
Northern Kentucky University



# Drivers of Anchor Strategies

## Why an Anchor Institution Movement Now

- University intellectual support for engaged scholarship (Boyer, etc.)
- Growing social service and infrastructure gaps
- Increased economic importance of eds and meds
- Change in federal policy and shifts in funding of federal education



## Windows Broken, Dreams Intact

## UC San Diego: 1992 (and 2014?)



There is no doubt that opposition to the administration is not only justified, but necessary. The co-ops should be able to keep their current status as student organizations — anything less would be an injustice.

Op-Ed column,  
Jeffrey  
Yamaguchi,  
UCSD Guardian,  
January 21,  
1992

# Who is “the University?”

- Administration
- Business Office
- Housing Office
- Financial Aid
- International Students
- Student Affairs
- Faculty, students, trustees, alumni, parents, etc.



# Business Office questions

- Is your organization financially viable?
- Is the service provided necessary or used?
- Two university goals are to provide education and to maintain the school's reputation. How does your co-op help them meet these goals?
- Does your co-op engage in things that could be considered risky? Universities are loathe to risk litigation.

## In loco parentis: University as “parent”

- Standards of cleanliness and organization can change with age.
- Administrators like to avoid complaints from parents or alumni.
- It is easy for an administrator to focus on the immediate fire that needs to be put out and lose sight of the deeper value of your co-op.

# Investor-type questions

- If you are using university resources (such as leasing a building), the big question is, “Does the co-op provide the best possible return of value to the university community?”
- If you are asking for additional resources, the above question can determine your success or failure in getting what you want.

# Key co-op strategies

- Face problems with a proactive action plan.
- Acknowledge problems in conjunction with the solutions you're implementing.
- Make it clear that the problem has been addressed and is less likely to occur again.
- DON'T cover-up. It only makes you look worse when the issue goes public.
- **The Almost Golden Rule** If your co-op helps the university achieve its goals, then they are likely to help you achieve yours.

# Strategy 1: Sound management

- Sound capital maintenance.
- Good “aesthetics” maintenance.
- Good cash flow, reserves, financially stable.
- Track record of few complaints.
- Record of dealing with complaints.

## Strategy 2: Stability (reliability)

- Demonstrate a need (high occupancy or strong sales).
- Easy to contact us — available during business hours.
- Phone number stays the same.
- Not too many different contact people.

## Strategy 3: Professionalism

- We complete appropriate financial statements.
- We have articulated long-range goals and have a plan to accomplish them.
- We are proactive in response to problems and changes.
- We have some knowledge of our market and how non co-ops operate.
- We have letterhead and our phones are answered in a professional manner.
- Our correspondence is neatly printed and spell-checked.

## Strategy 4: Community engagement

- Sponsor campus-wide events and **network** with students, faculty, and staff on campus.
- Help with “town-gown” relations by building coalitions with groups that are off campus.
- Maintain relationships with your alumni. Co-op alumni who remain connected to their co-op often donate to the university as well.
- Community engagement is an investment and a job—devote real time and dollars.



## Strategy 5: Public Relations

- 1) Have a system the University can relate to.
- 2) Take administrators out to lunch to discuss how things are going and educate the administration about your co-op.
- 3) Pass along favorable letters received by the co-op to administrators at appropriate times.
- 4) Invite administrators to educational events sponsored by your co-op. Make them proud of what you do.
- 5) Publicize positive events to student and local newspapers, social media and blogs.

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# Making a Proposal to the University

- Indicate the date/year the proposal was written.
- Use a brief descriptive title.
- Indicate who is recommending/authoring the proposal.
- Start with a concise, carefully worded statement of your proposed action.
- Include why action is needed, historical background, and other major options and relevant info.
- List probable benefits and possible drawbacks. Also list any alternatives which could be considered.
- Try to limit the proposal itself to one page, attaching supporting documentation if necessary.

# Places Where You May Want University Assistance

- Low-cost loans
- Marketing (co-op inclusion in mailings, web sites)
- Access to incoming student lists
- Discounts and funding (room rentals, conference funding, discount purchasing, collections assistance)
- Access to technical resources (legal, insurance, education and training, counseling/mediation)
- Low-cost leases for stores or housing property
- Access to used university equipment and furnishings
- **Incorporation in academic curriculum**

# Thank you!

**For more information:  
[www.community-wealth.org](http://www.community-wealth.org)**

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