

The Ties That Bind: Building and Operating the University of Connecticut's Multi-Metropolitan Tri-Campus

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Abstract

The University of Connecticut's Tri-Campus has concatenated three metropolitan campuses, including a location adjacent to one of the nation's most distressed cities. Continued growth and success requires attention to challenges on three levels: Tri-Campus leaders must work to ensure a common programmatic bond; faculty and staff at each site must achieve the university's academic goals, and the Tri-Campus and its components must work to serve the socio-economic needs of surrounding communities.

Visitors to the University of Connecticut's Torrington campus, nestled in the northwest hills of the Nutmeg State, are often struck by two impressions: "Can this be a university campus?" and, "There are a lot of trees and not much else here." The main campus building, resembling a 1950's elementary school, gives little encouragement that a high quality academic program resides behind the neat but aging facade. And all those trees – just why would anyone put a campus in the middle of a cow pasture?

The downtown Waterbury facility is a half-hour south on busy Route 8. A few steps from the historic green with its combination of stately but worn buildings and recent, modern "boxes", the bright brick and chrome facade of the university's newest campus location sparkles in an inviting manner. It is a bustling place with state of the art high-technology classrooms, the finest of furnishings and a location right across the street from large, new, and restored buildings comprising a city fine arts center.

The Greater Hartford campus is another half-hour east on Interstate 84. It is the oldest, largest and busiest of the university's five so-called regional campuses. Spread across 46 acres, one new and three middle-aged buildings circle partly around a scenic pond and its host of Canada geese. The clearly suburban neighborhood has neat rows of houses at the perimeter of the grounds and the gurgling Trout Brook just across the street. Although more than 2,000 students of many ethnic groups pursue a range of degrees from the baccalaureate to the doctoral level the campus director recently noted that Greater Hartford, with its serene location in a quiet part of town, is "one of the best kept secrets in Connecticut."

The three campuses would, to the casual observer, seem to have very little in common programmatically or administratively and until the late 1990's this was largely the

case. Each unit had its own director reporting to an administrator at the main campus in Storrs, largely developed and managed its own program, had faculty often working exclusively at its particular location, did its own recruiting, had various successes partnering with the local community, ran its operations along the model of a medieval city-state, and only begrudgingly cooperated with the other regional campus units which it saw as the other parties in an ongoing sibling rivalry for resources from the Old Woman In The Shoe to the east.

Three Campuses, Three Histories

The history of each campus also is somewhat different. Greater Hartford evolved from the Hartford Branch, started in 1940, as part of the university's early efforts to provide educational services on a statewide basis. The academic program, housed in a mansion in the city's prestigious west end, was relatively modest until World War II when thousands of managers sought training to work at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft and other central Connecticut defense enterprises. Growth continued at a rapid pace after the war due in large part to the G.I. Bill, which funded college degrees for veterans. In 1970, a new undergraduate building was constructed in West Hartford near the home of the university's School of Social Work and Law School and the property became known as the Greater Hartford Campus. An effort to relocate most of the campus to downtown Hartford in the 1990s met stiff resistance from some powerful West Hartford state legislators and was dropped.

The Torrington Campus started in the fall of 1957, offering late afternoon classes at the town's high school. The program proved successful and, following a bequest of funding and property from Julia Brooker Thompson, the present University Drive campus was established in 1965. The property removed the campus from the town's center to a bucolic setting just a few yards from the historic site where abolitionist John Brown was born. Except for the construction of a small building for the state's cooperative extension service, the campus has not changed much physically.

For most of its history, the University of Connecticut at Waterbury, established in 1942 as an extension center to help answer the educational needs of students in the surrounding area, was located in the 1876 Benedict-Miller mansion and adjacent structures. In the late 1990s, in answer to a call from then Governor John Rowland, a Waterbury native, the university began development of a new downtown facility designed in part to allow the academic program to grow and in part to assist with the renewal of an economically challenged urban area. The new campus, opened in 2003, has become a popular part of the city scene and has already run out of classroom space. As of fall 2004, the Waterbury enrollment has increased 22 percent over its first year to 900 students. All indications are that by the fall 2005 semester, the enrollment will break the 1,000-student mark.

Programmatic Similarities and Peculiarities

Programmatically, in the years before Tri-Campus, the academic offerings of the three campuses had some similarities. Until the late 1990s when the university began implementing regional campus program expansion, the regional campuses hosted an undergraduate program largely comprised of “branchfers” – students who would complete two years at the branch location and then move to the main campus for the remainder of their studies. A bachelor of general studies degree, tailored to the individual needs of a student and incorporating life experience in lieu of some credit hours, was the primary exception to the two-year rule.

Within the eventual Tri-Campus, however, Greater Hartford stood out with a number of significant graduate programs. As home to the University’s School of Social Work in particular, the West Hartford facility hosted students working on both masters and doctoral degrees.

First Impressions, Deceiving Impressions

Typically, the non-residential “branch” campus client base is drawn from the host and surrounding communities. As mentioned earlier, the locations of the three campuses, which at first look rural, suburban and urban, would suggest that the student body at each of the three units would also have little in common. In reality, though, each campus serves a student body of diverse economic, social and ethnic background and has academic and community service interests that are not dissimilar.

Figure 1. University of Connecticut Tri-Campus and Main Campus Locations

Key: Main Campus (1) and Tri-Campus locations at West Hartford (2), Torrington (3) and Waterbury (4).

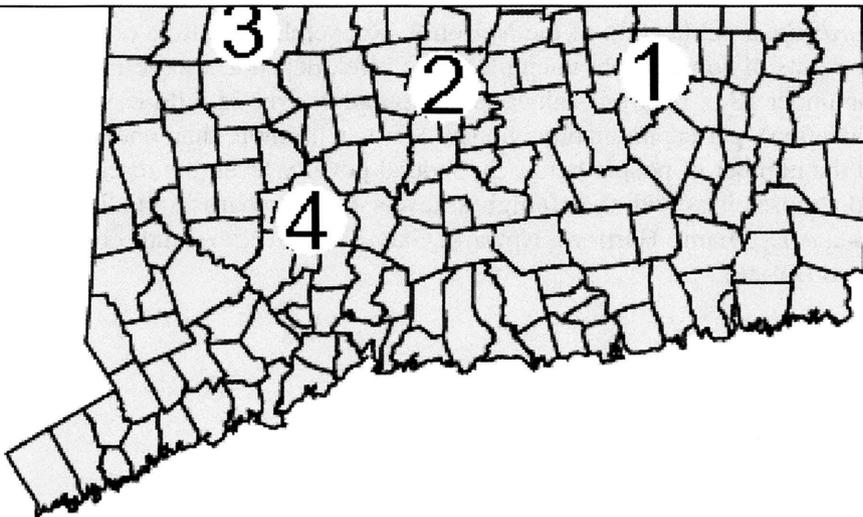
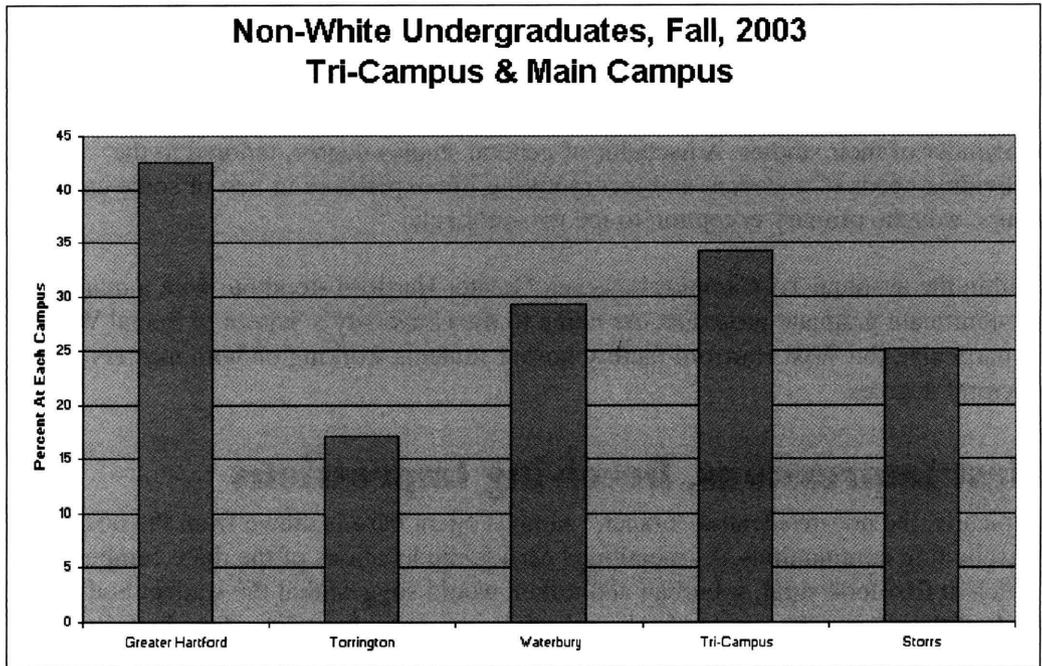


Figure 2. Non-White Undergraduates as a Percentage of All Undergraduate Students at Each Campus, 2003



The “suburban” West Hartford campus is a 10-minute drive from Hartford, the home of Connecticut’s capitol and one of the nation’s most distressed small cities. Hartford ranks 69th of 239 cities with populations in excess of 1,000 for unemployment, 34th of 239 in population per square mile, and, according to the Morgan-Quinto Press which publishes a number of rankings based on government statistics, 33rd in violent crime and 25th in the murder rate per 100,000 population of 318 communities for 2001.

Further evidence of the challenge presented by Hartford was given in *An Update On Urban Hardship*, a publication of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government. Using six points of comparison: unemployment level, dependency (defined as population under 18 or over 64), education (population over 25 with less than a high school education), per capita income, housing units with more than one person per room and the number of people below the federal poverty level, the researchers concluded, “those cities with the 10 highest levels of urban hardship in 2000 are, in order: Santa Ana, Miami, Hartford, Newark, Gary, Detroit, Cleveland, Fresno, Los Angeles and Buffalo.”

Figure 3. University of Connecticut Tri-Campus Cities – Income Compared to the State Median

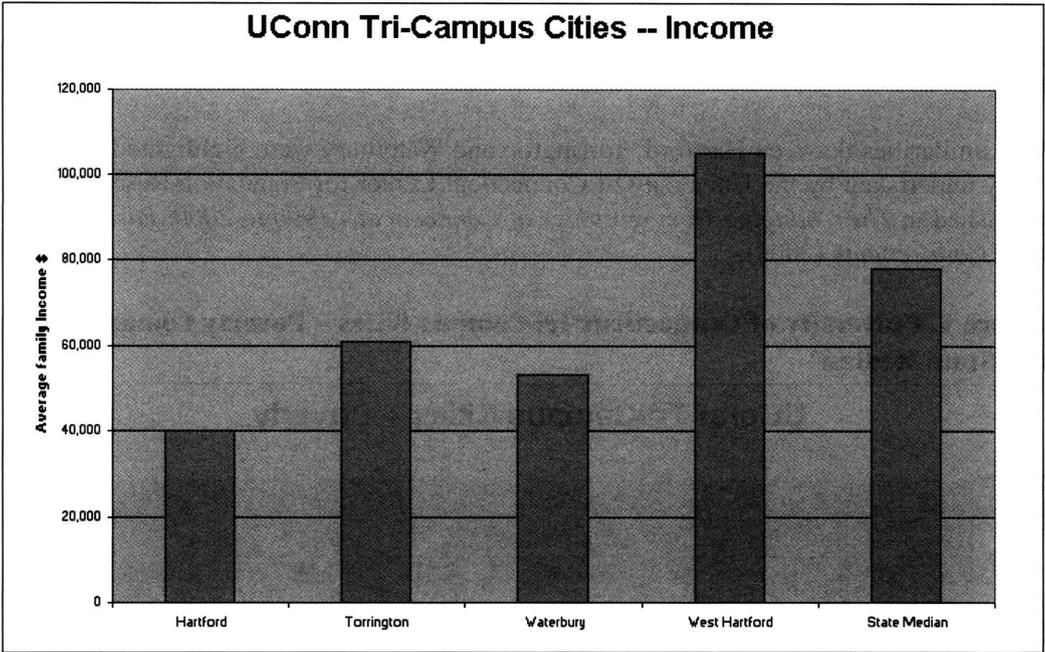
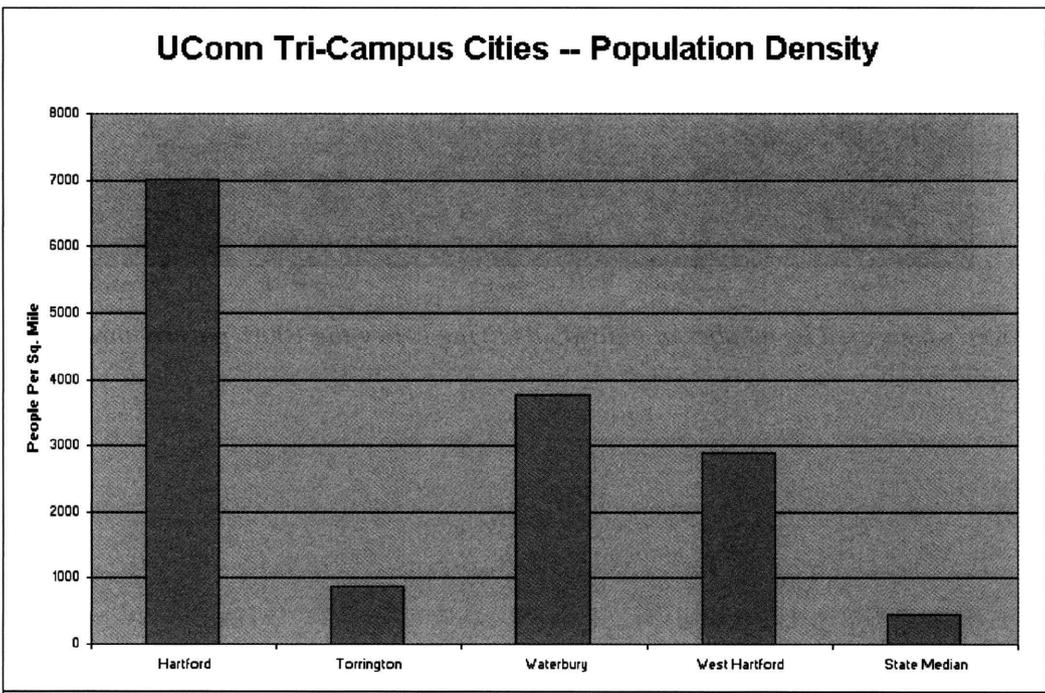


Figure 4. University of Connecticut Tri-Campus Cities – Population Density Compared to the State Median*

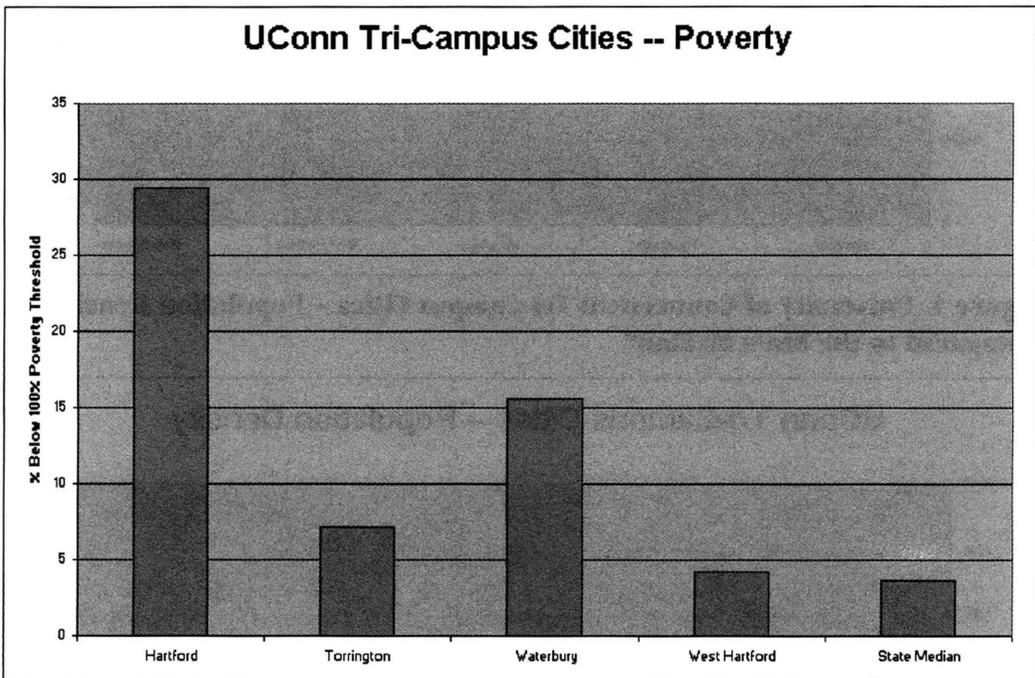


**Population density measured as people per square mile*

A quick trip down the hill from the pastoral University of Connecticut at Torrington leads one to an aging mill town with high unemployment and factories struggling to survive. The Waterbury campus, in its heart-of-an-economically-challenged-city location, has replaced several blighted urban blocks but remains surrounded by many more.

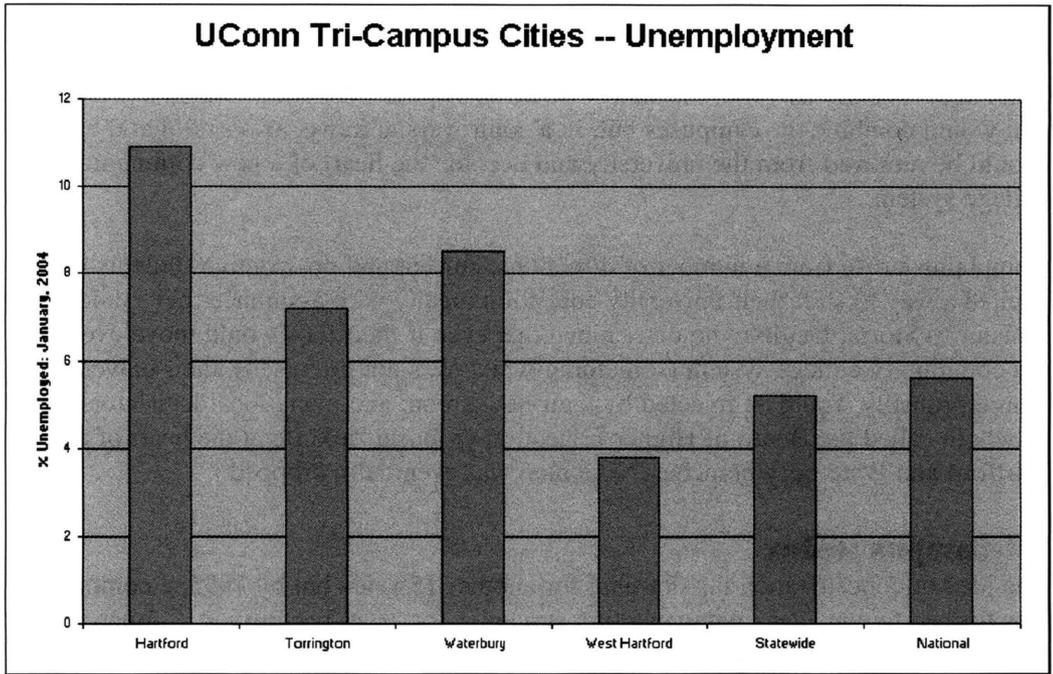
The similarities between Hartford, Torrington and Waterbury were highlighted in a study undertaken by the University of Connecticut Center for Population Research and published in *The Changing Demographics of Connecticut - 1990 to 2000, Part 2: The Five Connecticuts* (2004).

Figure 5. University of Connecticut Tri-Campus Cities – Poverty Compared to the State Median*



*Poverty measured by number of individuals living below the 100% poverty threshold

Figure 6. University of Connecticut Tri-Campus Cities – Unemployment Compared to the State and National Medians, January 2004



“The Five Connecticut” refers to a set of categories, which the center applied to each of the state’s communities following a detailed statistical analysis. Briefly defined, the categories are:

- **Urban core:** Lowest income, highest poverty, highest density; towns of “extremely high population density.”
- **Urban periphery:** Below average income, average poverty, high population density; “...transitional towns between the urban cores and suburbs.”
- **Suburban:** Above average income, low poverty, moderate population density; “...suburbs of more densely populated urban areas.”
- **Rural:** Average income, below average poverty, lowest population density; “...low population distinguish this group.”
- **Wealthy:** Exceptionally high income, low poverty, moderate population density; “...this group [has] high income or wealth.”

In spite of their different geographical settings and their general “look and feel,” Torrington was determined by the UConn Population Center to be an “urban periphery” location while both Hartford and Waterbury were found to have the status of “urban core.” Even West Hartford, the actual home of the Greater Hartford campus and a town that declares itself to be a place “Where City Style Meets Village Charm,” also fell into the “urban periphery” category. As Figures 3 through 6 highlight, Torrington, and in particular Waterbury, are well “on the Hartford side” of the state median relative to low income and high poverty and unemployment.

A Tri-Campus But Not UConn

From these commonalities, and an interest in assisting the development and success of the two smaller campuses by linking them to their wealthier sister to the east, events, which would eventually lead to today's Tri-Campus, began to take shape some 20 years ago. As early as 1980, the state's Board of Higher Education floated a proposal that would combine the campuses but, in a controversial move, also said that they should be removed from the university and become the heart of a new community college system.

Complaints arose from a number of directions: current and prospective students who wanted a way to start their university education locally with assurance they could later transfer to Storrs; faculty who determined that even if their jobs would move over to the community college system (something which was not promised), their university tenure probably would be rejected by their new union; and many local legislators, one of whom called the Board of Higher Education proposal "a knife at the heart of the Hartford and Waterbury branches." The plan was eventually dropped.

Tri-Campus Redux

The idea of concatenation lay dormant for another 15 years but by 1995, a committee was formed to consider implementation strategies for "Har-Tor-Bury, A Cooperative Arrangement Among the Hartford, Torrington and Waterbury Campuses." This initiative, lead by the university's office of provost and vice president for academic affairs, was aimed at combining program offerings, allowing cross-enrollments with an expectation that classes could be taken at any of the three units, the development of a limited number of four-year programs, the creation of distance learning capability, and the transfer of staff and faculty between campuses as necessary to achieve the goals of the new combined operations.

The stated goals were:

- "Greater access to degree programs by students in the mid-state area.
- More efficient utilization of instructional resources.
- Development and formal approval of baccalaureate programs for three campuses in areas with adequate faculty coverage.
- Enhancement of instruction through the appropriate utilization of distance learning technology."

Growing Interest in A Merging Of Programs

As the Tri-Campus planning group moved forward, the university began an intensive discussion of a new strategic plan that would be finalized by 1997. As with all such strategic planning activities, there was a wide range of self-examination processes conducted at a number of levels. Among them was a "Strategic Planning Implementation Task Force on Regional Campuses." This group met to draft a list of priority actions to meet Objective 8.5 of the then-draft master strategic plan. That goal read: "Evaluate and develop the use of the regional campuses as centers that meet the needs

of traditional and non-traditional students, part-time students and the community of degree-oriented programs, continuing education as centers for delivering University programs.”

Several priority actions appeared in the task force’s final report but two of them would be critical for the subsequent implementation of the Tri-Campus. These were:

- “.... Degrees conferred to students matriculating at the regional campuses will be those of the institution as a whole.”
- “The three mid-state campuses (Hartford, Torrington and Waterbury) have begun cooperating on class, scheduling and other issues. The chancellor should determine if a single administrative entity for these three sites would best serve the needs of the students at those campuses.”

The first of the two proposed initiatives, development of localized four-year degree programs, would prove hugely controversial but would eventually become the basis for a tremendous amount of growth within the subsequent Tri-Campus. The second proposal, built to some extent on the work already being done by the provost’s office, laid the foundation for the formal process that would lead to the creation of a Tri-Campus.

Without something like Tri-Campus, the advocates of localized baccalaureates were faced with a challenge by the Torrington and Waterbury campuses. As noted earlier, Torrington was then and still is a very small operation in a remote location. The Waterbury campus, new as of two years ago, was in 1997, a very different type of operation. How would a student be expected to remain at either of these campuses for four years and walk away with a degree representing “the institution as a whole?”

It became obvious that the university’s plan to offer four-year programs at the three mid-state regional campuses would ride the coattails of the Tri-Campus proposal, having as part of its rationale the sharing of the tremendous resources of the West Hartford campus with the other two. To understand the development of the Tri-Campus, though, one must first know a little about the organization that is the University of Connecticut and its five regional campuses.

Something About a University

The University of Connecticut began in humble fashion as the Storrs Agricultural School in 1881. Located in the rural, eastern part of the state, it grew rapidly through the 1880’s and staged a significant coup when, in 1893, it wrested away from Yale a federal designation as Connecticut’s “land grant” institution.

Since that time, the University has embodied the spirit of the two land grant acts passed by Congress in 1862 and 1890, which called for the funding of “instruction in agriculture and mechanic arts, the English language and the various branches of mathematical, physical, natural and economic science, with special reference to their applications in the industries of life...” The mission of the land grant institution has

been construed in modern times to be, as university President Philip Austin has noted, “teaching, research and service,” and it was upon that foundation that the Connecticut Agricultural College was transformed into the University of Connecticut in 1939.

The strategic plan of 1997 formalized the university’s interest in pursuing the three elements President Austin highlighted. As part of its ongoing commitment to serve the needs of the state, the university’s mission contains the following statement:

“The University is both the land grant and the public research university in a state which has one of the highest per capita incomes in the nation. As such, it must serve a citizenry which demands and has a right to expect excellence in a state which is highly developed technologically, but which retains the agricultural and intellectual heritage from which it has grown.”

Likewise, the unique mission of the regional campuses, as described in the “Strategic Planning Implementation Task Force on Regional Campuses” had evolved from localized two-year offerings with a smattering of graduate degrees to a much more extensive plate of offerings:

- “The regional campuses provide local access to the flagship, public research university’s degree programs and services for highly motivated, intelligent, traditional and non-traditional students, who, because of life obligations or financial situations, are area bound. These students attend regional campuses as their first and perhaps only UConn choice.
- The regional campuses primarily offer upper-division instruction, providing area-bound students with the opportunity to complete baccalaureate degrees in a limited number of programs close to home, jobs and families.
- The regional campuses host selected graduate courses and graduate degree programs which reflect the needs of local communities.
- The regional campuses provide lower-division offerings necessary to complete the bachelor’s programs and to provide sufficient background for those students who must complete degrees in programs offered only at Storrs.
- The regional campuses serve as an entry point for access to the university for qualified students with limited economic resources. The regional campuses provide their local communities with outreach programs to address the educational needs of the citizenry and work with local leaders on projects of mutual benefit...”

Tri-Campus Takes Shape

Building upon this philosophy, Tri-Campus planners crafted a proposal that outlined the programmatic as well as the service goals of the new unit.

“The University of Connecticut’s Tri-Campus unites the Hartford, Torrington, and Waterbury campuses into a single academic and administrative unit in order to realize the full potential of the combined intellectual capacity of the faculty, staff and student body so that the university can offer an appropriate

set of programs in this region. This Tri-Campus collaborative will function as a single academic unit with an integrated faculty of more than 60 professors and a student body of close to 2,000. By combining the faculties, the capability to offer four-year degree programs is immediately available in selected disciplines. Administrative structures will be integrated to achieve efficiencies while maintaining an appropriate level of management services at each site in order to attend to the needs of the students....

“It increases the university’s commitments to these three communities by providing an opportunity for students in these areas to earn four-year undergraduate degrees from the University of Connecticut. Building upon the strengths of the faculty and the interests of the current students, the Tri-Campus will focus upon interlocking humanities and social science disciplines to provide depth to the degree offerings. Each campus will maintain its distinct name and location with an on-site full-time director responsible for day-to-day operations and community outreach, and to act as a champion for the students. A senior director responsible for enrollment management, coordination and scheduling, and program development and marketing will oversee the Tri-Campus collaborative.” (*The University of Connecticut Tri-Campus Role And Scope*, July 21, 1998, p. 1)

Part of the incentive to move forward with the Tri-Campus design evolved from a market research report concluded in early 1998 by the university’s Center For Survey Research & Analysis. Some of the key factors included:

- “29 percent of those living in the Tri-Campus area are in the market for higher education services.”
- “Among those currently enrolled at a community college or technical school, 44 percent say they plan on transferring to a four-year” program.
- “A total of 52 percent... say they plan on taking college level courses over the next five years....”
- The quality of academic programs and the ability to complete programs locally were the two most important factors in choosing an institution of higher learning and finally,
- More than 80 percent of respondents said they would consider a University of Connecticut branch campus for their educational opportunities.

Connecticut’s Board of Governors of Higher Education officially endorsed the Tri-Campus on March 2, 1999, as part of an overall agreement to expand program offerings at the regional campuses. Discussions then focused on not only constructing the Tri-Campus as a unit but also determining what its leadership structure would be.

Tri-Campus Organizational Structure

As designed, the organizational structure of Tri-Campus is, to the uninitiated, complex at best. It represents each of the three campuses as individual entities; links them to one another and with the office of the associate vice provost for Tri-Campus; and,

through various reporting and relational lines, is integrated into the structure of the University of Connecticut.

The structure provides all the simplicity of a Gordian knot within the multi-faceted complexity of a highly unionized, major land grant university in a state with three public higher education systems (UConn, the state university system, and the community colleges). This situation has led to an unfortunate politicizing of Connecticut's higher education process made more complex by a number of political appointments in important leadership positions. Within the last 10 years Connecticut has committed to more than \$2 billion in bonding (UConn 2000 and UConn 21st Century) for infrastructure throughout the University — a fantastic commitment to the state's flagship institution, but one that has been accompanied by increased political pressure from a number of directions.

Administratively, and in the areas of student support and community engagement, Tri-Campus has significant flexibility to design and implement a structure and programs that meet the special needs of its commuter students. Moreover, it has tremendous capabilities to develop mechanisms to address the challenges facing institutions serving its urban/metropolitan areas including the cities of Hartford, Torrington, and Waterbury as well as the northwest quarter of the state that the combined area represents. Tri-Campus has access to colleagues at the largest UConn campus at Storrs and accesses expertise from the total resources of the University of Connecticut to support its mission.

At the same time, we have abated a number of programmatic challenges posed by competing academic institutions by working closely and collaboratively with our colleagues to gain their support for our mission or at least to establish a climate of benign neglect for our need to be somewhat different from the larger campus at Storrs.

Tri-Campus Organizational Structure: Leadership

There are only three full-time positions with 100 percent time allocation to Tri-Campus leadership: associate vice provost, executive director of Tri-Campus administration; and the office manager and human resources officer for Tri-Campus. In addition to these positions, Tri-Campus has individuals who carry responsibilities for certain sectors on their home campuses and provide leadership in those sectors throughout Tri-Campus:

- The Tri-Campus fiscal officer provides leadership for the Tri-Campus as well as each campus' budgetary process. She also serves as the Greater Hartford campus's fiscal officer and supervises the fiscal officers for the Waterbury and Torrington campuses.
- Two individuals provide leadership for Information Technology throughout Tri-Campus. These staff members each have responsibility for their home campus IT support system (Waterbury and Greater Hartford) and work together to serve the Torrington campus and the Tri-Campus associate vice provost's office. All of the IT personnel in Tri-Campus report to one or the other of these individuals and IT human resources are available as needed throughout Tri-Campus.

- A senior recruiter who provides leadership for the total Tri-Campus recruitment effort and is our primary liaison to the UConn admissions office at Storrs. She provides leadership to the recruiters at the Greater Hartford and Waterbury campuses and has specific responsibility for the Torrington campus recruiting efforts.

Each of these positions report directly to the executive director of Tri-Campus administration and have responsibility to work with the campus directors to insure that each campus is provided the specific support it needs in these areas. In all three areas, we have been able to provide each campus with increased resources in general and, more specifically, with specialized expertise that, previous to the Tri-Campus configuration, was simply not available to any of the three campuses.

Tri-Campus Organizational Structure: Campus Directors

Administratively and programmatically, each of the three campuses has a campus director who is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the campus, its student and business affairs, and its involvement in the community. The director serves in a CEO capacity on that campus. The directors report to the associate vice provost for Tri-Campus who, in turn, reports to the UConn provost through the senior vice provost for academic administration. Each campus has a fairly traditional internal administrative structure that is a combination of systems that were in place before the advent of Tri-Campus and changes that have occurred since Tri-Campus. As noted earlier, there is some similarity among the campuses but not a great deal primarily because of the differences in scale and community involvement.

The director position includes a 75 percent commitment to campus leadership and a 25 percent commitment to provide leadership to a Tri-Campus program or initiative. The dichotomy of the two roles is used to insure that each campus has a leader committed to its success and that leader also is integrated into the Tri-Campus system and supports the development of a symbiotic relationship among the campuses. It also insures that the unique skills and expertise of the directors are applied to the Tri-Campus system as well as their respective campuses.

The dual campus and Tri-Campus responsibilities of the directors have helped to provide day-to-day leadership for four additional administrative and student services initiatives that are underway as a result of the Tri-Campus configuration.

Tri-Campus Organizational Structure: Staffing Considerations

Perhaps more important to the potential success of Tri-Campus than the structure of the organizational chart and reporting lines is a system of leadership that has depended heavily on the empowerment of individuals and groups of individuals with significant skills and significant commitment to the success of Tri-Campus. These individuals also have a commitment to the transition from a focus on teaching to provide the first two years of undergraduate education with all students moving on to the Storrs campus to an urban land grant mission with undergraduate and graduate degree programs focused on the unique characteristics of the region; student opportunities and support systems

uniquely focused on commuter students; the highest standards of faculty research and scholarly activity, and community engagement in each location and Tri-Campus wide.

A slightly different situation exists for a number of units within the Tri-Campus but also have their primary reporting lines to Storrs. This duality has proven difficult for some but one successful example is the Tri-Campus Libraries, which previously worked in a cooperative team setting within the university libraries system but with only a “weak dotted line” relationship to their local campus communities.

In 2001, the Tri-Campus Libraries were formed as a separate group within the university libraries and began to establish tighter links to the administration of the Tri-Campus and its member units. While still largely reporting to Storrs, Tri-Campus Libraries staff play an increasing role in the management of the Tri-Campus itself including participation on high-level planning and implementation groups, facilitating a series of issues forums, becoming active in First Year Experience teaching, and a number of other significant involvements.

The organizational success of the utilization of a multiple staffing arrangements, including direct Tri-Campus reports, campus-specific assignments, split reporting lines, and Storrs-based operations with strong local connections, is leading the Tri-Campus to its next administrative change. Facilities operations will be assigned to one individual working with staff on each campus, collaborating with each director, and (in this case, perhaps most important) representing Tri-Campus facilities needs with decision-makers at the university level.

In all of these situations, we have learned the value of having highly skilled, respected professionals providing expertise essential to each campus as well as to the Tri-Campus. Even though the system only began three years ago it has already had positive impacts throughout Tri-Campus and, by extension, the university as a whole.

Tri-Campus Organizational Structure: Programmatic Initiatives

With degree programs and course offerings, student and faculty support systems, as well as faculty and staff appointments funded and organized through Tri-Campus, personnel and students are accessing resources at all three campuses. The result is a need for a level of consistency of programs, a focus on organizational characteristics that allow a smooth transition from one campus to another, and an ability to insure that while each campus maintains its own identity there is sufficient oversight to insure that Tri-Campus opportunities can be accessed at each campus. The Tri-Campus transition to focus on new bachelors degree programs is of primary importance and has increased the urgency of collaboration for consistent, high quality administrative and support systems.

Tri-Campus initiatives in the areas of scheduling, advising and retention, career planning and placement, and adjunct faculty support systems are at various stages of development and implementation. An individual who has held responsibility for that area of emphasis at one of the campuses leads each initiative. The initiative leader is joined by those individuals who have held those responsibilities at the other two campuses, thus making up the Tri-Campus team charged with turning activities that had been independent on each campus into effective programs to serve all of Tri-Campus. Each initiative has a specific charge:

- The **Tri-Campus Schedule Initiative** will create a Tri-Campus course schedule that will insure that courses are offered to fulfill the requirements for the new Tri-Campus bachelors degree programs. Specific objectives include: students can graduate within a four-year timetable with careful planning; courses that students may have to travel to another campus for are offered at times that allow for greater ease of commuting; identical courses are not offered at the same time on more than one campus, and the breadth of faculty responsibilities are considered in the scheduling process as well as their need to travel from campus to campus.
- The **Advising and Retention Initiative** will develop and implement a system to insure that all advising and retention efforts take into account the needs and characteristics of commuter students; First Year Experience programs are effectively planned and implemented; there is sufficient consistency of student support programs and services throughout Tri-Campus so students can effectively commute among the campuses to fulfill the course requirements of their major; support systems are changed to focus on the increased emphasis on degree completion within Tri-Campus; data are collected to measure progress in establishing, implementing, and maintaining and effecting advising system.
- The **Career Planning and Placement Initiative** will develop an approach to providing these services to augment what is available through the Storrs campus in a way that not only provides career planning assistance to our students but also involves the local community in that process.
- The **Adjunct Faculty Support Systems Initiative** has begun in response to new University of Connecticut adjunct faculty policies as well in recognition of the importance of adjunct faculty to the implementation of Tri-Campuses programs in specific and our campus communities in general.

Permanent teams responsible for these initiatives will develop and implement the resultant programs. The campus director from his or her home campus supports each team leader on a day-to-day basis. The campus director assigned to the initiative becomes a part of the team discussion as needed and is involved with the associate vice provost in final decision-making and resource allocation to the initiative.

Tri-Campus Organizational Structure: Academics

Academically, although budgets for faculty recruitment, salaries, and support are held by Tri-Campus, selection, appointments, promotion, tenure, and merit decisions are made through the university's departmental and college/school structure. In all aspects, the associate vice provost for Tri-Campus, in collaboration with the campus directors,

provides input relative to faculty personnel decisions and reward systems to the department heads.

In Tri-Campus as in much of American higher education, academic leadership and change is a dance of collaboration, encouragement, discussion, and compromise among deans, department heads, faculty, university senates, students, the keepers of the disciplines, trustees, the state agencies created to ride herd over higher education institutions, as well as legislators and public officials who want to be involved for various reasons. The primary differences between the challenges that we face in bringing about academic change at Tri-Campus and those who try to make such changes at the larger Storrs campus is our distance from the “Mother Ship” where most of the deans, departments, and faculty spend their time; our focus on multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary degree programs, our dependence on adjunct faculty, and our size.

An Academic Program Generator

Given the complexity of the structure of the organization, it is not surprising that decisions about the mix of academic programs to be offered at Tri-Campus would require the involvement of multiple layers of offices and individuals within and outside of the university. In addition to the usual academic checks and balances, Tri-Campus is subject to another process unique in the state. Any requests for additional degree programs at Tri-Campus require the usual process of university and state approval. Discussions also must be held with the leadership of the state college system as well as the community colleges. The former is to help prevent unnecessary program duplication and to acknowledge the political importance of those involved. The latter is in response to Tri-Campus’s responsibilities to insure that mutually beneficial programs are articulated with the community colleges in the Tri-Campus catchments area.

Our most important tool in planning for, developing, insuring the necessary approvals, and implementing degree programs has been our specific role and scope and mission. Essentially we have a broad focus on issues of urban areas and communities and public policy. Many of our programs focus specifically on these areas. Others fulfill the traditional requirements of the discipline but include opportunities to relate that discipline to urban and community issues and public policy. It is also particularly convenient that the expanse of urban and community issues and public policy and the disciplines that have an impact upon them are significantly broad.

The following degree programs are either currently offered at Tri-Campus or are in a process of approval:

- **Bachelors of General Studies** – The BGS degree has been offered in Tri-Campus for more than 20 years. It is primarily focused on adult students who have completed some college and will take their upper level courses at UConn (College of Continuing Studies).

- **Bachelor of Arts in Urban and Community Studies** – Urban and Community Studies is an interdisciplinary major with a focus on cities and suburbs as well as neighborhoods and communities. Students may concentrate in the areas of social and human services, public policy and administration, urban and regional planning, or urban culture (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).
- **Bachelor of Science in Business and Technology** – The BSBT offers students a broad based business degree with a special emphasis on information technology and its application in business (School of Business Administration).
- **Bachelor of Arts in Psychology** – The psychology degree received final approval on September 16, 2004. It is identical to the psychology degree offered elsewhere at the University of Connecticut but allows students to focus their electives, internships, and research activities on issues and populations that exist in the urban areas and communities of Tri-Campus (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).
- **Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies** – The HDFS program examines families and human development in the context of the broader social environment. The degree is the same as those offered on other UConn campuses but the Tri-Campus location and the research and content emphases of Tri-Campus faculty allow students to focus their electives as well as experiential learning on issues and populations that exist in urban areas and communities. The HDFS degree received final approval on September 16, 2004 (School of Family Studies).
- **Bachelor of Arts in American Studies** — The American studies degree has been approved by the university to be offered at Tri-Campus but negotiations are ongoing for state approval. It is a multidisciplinary program requiring core courses from the following tracks and an emphasis in one of the tracks: history, culture and society; literature and the arts; economics, political science, and the law; and the Americas. The Tri-Campus program will provide special opportunities for students to work with: the Connecticut state historian (a Tri-Campus faculty member); the Beecher Society (partnering with Tri-Campus to re-build Harriet Beecher Stowe’s birthplace adjacent to the Torrington campus); and other historical and cultural entities in the Tri-Campus area (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).
- **Masters of Business Administration** – The MBA is offered at the Waterbury campus and at downtown Hartford (School of Business Administration).
- **Masters of Science in Nursing** – The master’s degree in nursing received final approval on September 16, 2004, to be offered at Tri-Campus. It is part of a nursing pathways program, which includes the associate degree from Naugatuck Valley Community College and the bachelor’s degree from Western Connecticut State University. It also involves a partnership with the two Waterbury hospitals and will offer many of its required courses on line (School of Nursing).
- **Masters of Public Administration** – The university has recently created a new department of public policy. The department eventually will be located at the Greater Hartford campus and will be a part of Tri-Campus. The masters of public administration degree program will be moving with the department to Tri-Campus from its former location in Storrs. The physical move has already occurred and state approval for the programmatic transition is expected (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)

- **Masters of Survey Research** – Also a part of the new department of public policy, the MSR degree is linked to the high-profile Connecticut Poll and provides a focus on public opinion polls and survey research (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).

In addition to the list of Tri-Campus programs, there are opportunities for collaboration and partnership with other programs in the Tri-Campus region. For example, Tri-Campus and the School of Social Work, located at the Greater Hartford campus, have partnered to offer some of the courses for the MSW at the Waterbury campus and there are arrangements in place for students to pursue various combinations of the MPA, MBA, MSW, and law degrees.

Who Am I?

With its academic and programmatic initiatives under way and its leadership model becoming established, the Tri-Campus began to wrestle with its identity vis-à-vis not only with competing academic institutions but also within the university system. At a regional campus retreat hosted by the university administration, selected administrative, faculty and staff members of the Tri-Campus joined with peers from the other two regional campuses in Groton and Stamford on a voyage of self-discovery leading to revision of local mission and vision statements.

Tri-Campus was at somewhat of a disadvantage in relation to its peers. It was a new entity with a very brief history. The other two units had developed distinct niches that would form the bases for their ongoing discussions. Groton, the center of the university's sea grant activities, had a burgeoning marine studies program accompanying its undergraduate efforts. Stamford, in the heart of a part of Connecticut rich in corporate headquarters, was benefiting from and playing to its business and business-related clients.

But what of Tri-Campus with its diverse programs serving at least three different metropolitan communities? At the retreat, held in September 2001, Tri-Campus attendees indicated a commitment to develop and maintain areas of teaching, fellowship, research and outreach excellence that reflect the unique environment and capacities of Tri-Campus. In subsequent retreat discussions, Tri-Campus planners formulated the following elements of a *Vision For Tri-Campus in Five Years*:

- “Tri-Campus will be the institution of choice for students within the region.
- Tri-Campus will develop selected areas of academic excellence reflecting its expertise and market need.
- Tri-Campus will have in place campus-based grant supported research programs.
- Tri-Campus will have developed a network of community partnerships with each campus recognized as a “go to” place for cultural and intellectual programs, events, and partnerships....”

As part of concluding discussions, representatives of the Tri-Campus identified “community service” as being the programmatic niche that would most appropriately identify the still-new unit. This made academic sense for a number of reasons. The

university's School of Social Work had a long history of community involvement. The new urban and community studies curriculum had service activities imbedded in its many offerings, and proposed linkages between the two programs would mean a growing number of such initiatives.

Perhaps more importantly, the proximity of the three campuses to distressed urban areas meant that there was significant opportunity for the Tri-Campus to make critical contributions to the University's mission which states in part: "The university strives to equip graduates with the skills and attitudes they need to become effective members of a complex society, with the basis for a lifelong commitment to learning, and with the ability to use their talents and knowledge in the service of others."

Partnerships and Collaborations

By identifying itself as primarily interested in activities that would not only be beneficial to its students but would also serve important needs of its adjacent communities, the Tri-Campus began a number of service-oriented partnerships and activities as well as committing to continue several that pre-dated it. Following are partnerships on each of the Tri-Campus sites that followed the development of the Tri-Campus model.

Greater Hartford: Downtown Student Corporate Intern

Housing Task Force – Its mission was to determine if it was economically viable for a developer(s) to construct a critical mass of residential units in downtown Hartford that would house college/university students during the school year and corporate interns in the summer. This was designed to further the economic growth and prosperity of the metro Hartford region by positioning the city of Hartford as a positive place for people to begin their careers.

Foundation for Excellent Schools – The foundation is committed to helping member schools in high-need communities identify, initiate, and sustain practices that will enable students to achieve stronger performance. The role of the Greater Hartford campus is to work with Hartford Public High School students who have been selected to participate in the Foundation for Excellent Schools Century Program. The campus provides new opportunities and mentoring support to these students as they prepare for college and a career after high school.

Hartford College Park Educational Corridor – The corridor is a collaboration of many educational institutions in the Hartford region designed to serve student groups ranging from elementary school through college and on to established workers seeking continuing education.

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Catalyst Fund – As Greater Hartford's communitywide charitable endowment, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is permanently committed to improving the quality of life for residents throughout the region. Within the foundation, the Catalyst Endowment shares a commitment to the

greater Hartford community by learning more about the critical issues facing the region and providing grant support to nonprofit organizations facing those issues. Each year the Catalyst Endowment chooses a different topic to study, analyzes related grant proposals, and awards grants to local nonprofit organizations.

Inroads – Inroads is a nonprofit organization to develop and place talented minority youth in business and industry and prepare them for corporate and community leadership. The organization recruits minority students who are seniors in high school or in their first or second year in college for internships in business, accounting, and biology-related firms. Students who are accepted into the program attend a “talent pool” weekend to learn employment skills and to interview with sponsoring companies. Students are selected by a sponsoring company and given a paid internship with that company during the summer months and school vacations.

JUMPSTART Program – The JUMPSTART program is with the University of Connecticut Health Center. The UConn Health Center participates in the Health Professions Partnership Initiative with Hartford Public Schools, UConn Storrs, Central Connecticut State University, and Wesleyan University. Funding for the program comes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the AETNA Foundation, and the Connecticut Department of Higher Education. The purpose of the partnership is to provide access and preparation to students interested in the health professions who are the first in their family to earn a four-year degree, come from modest family means, and/or are from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in healthcare. JUMPSTART is one of the 12 enrichment programs under HPPI that works with students in grades 9-11 enrolled at Bulkeley and Weaver high schools’ Health Profession Academies. JUMPSTART consists of a six-week summer program followed by a 20-week Saturday Academy series academic year program aimed at giving students a “jumpstart” on topics and materials presented during the school year.

MetroHartford Alliance – The MetroHartford Alliance is a 1,000-member organization that uses the expertise and financial resources of its business, institutional and municipal members to pursue the sustainable economic and business growth needed to secure the Hartford region’s premier quality of life. The mission of the alliance is to ensure that the Hartford region competes as one of the country’s premier places for people to live, work, play, and rear families.

New England’s Knowledge Corridor – The Hartford-Springfield interstate region is an integrated economic area that straddles the Massachusetts-Connecticut border. The corridor has about 1.7 million residents in 111 municipalities. This 3,058-square-mile region along the Connecticut River is commonly referred to as New England’s Knowledge Corridor due to its concentration of 27 colleges and universities with a combined total enrollment of more than 125,000. In addition to this high concentration of intellectual capital, the corridor boasts benefits such as a transportation infrastructure with easy access to Boston and New York City, unparalleled productivity, and a diverse economy.

Summer Enrichment Reading Program – The focus of the Summer Enrichment Reading Program for grades 5 through 11, is to develop a love of reading. It emphasizes skill development for increased fluency and comprehension.

Torrington Campus

Litchfield County Writers Project — The project’s mission is to preserve, collect, study, and communicate with a worldwide audience the life, art and spirit of the writers of Litchfield County within a broad artistic and historical context. It nourishes the creative life of the community by providing a place for reflection, involvement, and discovery at the Torrington campus. The project houses a collection of more than 500 published works of Litchfield County authors and brings authors to the campus regularly for readings and workshops and to visit classes. The project was on hiatus for the last two academic years. It was reconvened in fall 2004.

Northwest Connecticut Community Partnership Team — With the Susan B. Anthony Project, UConn Torrington will work on domestic violence issues in the community.

Nutmeg Conservatory Partnership — Students who come to Torrington to dance with the world-renowned Nutmeg Conservatory can earn UConn credit for some of their dance work. Nutmeg Director Sharon Dante is an approved instructor of UConn’s School of Fine Arts.

Partnership with Beecher House Society — UConn, Yale, and the Beecher House Society are working to establish the Beecher Center for Human Rights on land adjacent to the UConn Campus where educational programming will be held.

Partnership with Northwestern Connecticut Community College — Among a number of resource-sharing initiatives, UConn Torrington science students now have access to NCCC’s superior laboratories while Torrington’s parking lot has become home to the community college’s motorcycle safety course.

Torrington Historical Society — UConn Torrington and the Historical Society are in the planning stages of a permanent John Brown exhibit to be located on the campus. Brown grew up in Torrington next to the campus and near where the Beecher House will be reassembled.

Tutoring/Mentoring Program in Torrington Public Schools — Now in its third year, this project matches UConn Torrington students, acting as academic tutors/mentors, with students at Torrington High School and Torrington Middle School. About 10 UConn students serve as tutors each semester.

Waterbury Campus

City of Waterbury Board of Education — A partnership exists between the new psychology department at the UConn Waterbury campus and the Waterbury Board of Education special education department. This unique program offered by the psychology department addresses the complex needs of autistic children, their parents, public school teachers, and the professional staff.

Connecticut Reads — Waterbury campus is in the third year of a tutorial program supported by a Connecticut Reads grant. The UConn Waterbury campus, in collaboration with a local underachieving elementary school, provides about 12 UConn students to go to the school and work two-to-one with underachieving readers. Over time, the program has significantly improved the scores of the participating students.

Naugatuck Valley Community College, Saint Mary's Hospital and Waterbury Hospital – A newly announced partnership with the UConn Waterbury campus, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Saint Mary's Hospital, and Waterbury Hospital will provide an opportunity for health professionals to achieve graduate and undergraduate degrees in the nursing.

New Palace Theater — An internship partnership with the New Palace Theater in Waterbury will be in place for Spring 2005. Waterbury's new fine arts center is in the recently reconstructed historic theater.

Where Are We And Where Are We Going?

The success of the University of Connecticut's Tri-Campus can be measured in a number of ways. For example, we have achieved the academic goals set forth by the university's strategic planners by developing four-year undergraduate programs, implementing new graduate programs, enhancing and improving services that predated Tri-Campus, and hiring and retaining excellent faculty and staff. We have built a new campus that offers state of the art facilities to its clientele. We have designed and implemented a new management structure incorporating team-based techniques. And we have joined together three disparate campuses into one coordinated administrative effort.

In looking back at the first years of Tri-Campus, there is one development for which we are the most grateful: our growing involvement with our Tri-Campus urban communities. The formation of our community service niche has given us new impetus and direction work toward embracing the needs of the distressed environments around us. The many new collaborations that have come into being attest not only to our willingness to share our resources and expertise but also to the willingness of those communities to develop a symbiotic relationship with us. In this we are both teachers and both learners. What we offer Hartford, Torrington and Waterbury will be returned to us tenfold in the kind of education no student can obtain from the pages of a book, on the Internet, or in a classroom lecture.

The challenges of the Tri-Campus's communities are not easily solved. Our commitment to them is to not only grow to more effectively meet those challenges but to improve our own learning, techniques and skills along the way. The Tri-Campus has just started on a long path to a future of community service. For us it is "the road taken," and taken by choice.

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