

Netter Center for Community Partnerships Overview 2020-2021

Our Mission

Founded in 1992, the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships is the University's primary vehicle for advancing civic and community engagement at Penn. It brings together the resources and assets of both the University and the wider community to help solve universal problems such as poverty, health inequities, environmental sustainability, and inadequate, unequal education as they are manifested in the University's local geographic area of West Philadelphia and Philadelphia at large. The Netter Center develops and helps implement democratic, mutually transformative, place-based partnerships between Penn and West Philadelphia that advance research, teaching, learning, practice, and service and improve the quality of life on campus and in the community. The Netter Center works with and serves as a model for other higher education institutions across the United States and around the world.

Netter Center Strategies

Three key strategies underpin our work. The first is academically based community service (ABCS), service rooted in and intrinsically connected to research, teaching, and learning. The second is university-assisted community schools (UACS), which educate, engage, empower, and serve not only students, but also all other members of the community, providing an organizing framework for bringing our programs, including ABCS courses, to West Philadelphia schools. Third, we view ABCS and UACS as core to a comprehensive anchor institution strategy in which universities engage in sustained, mutually beneficial partnerships with their communities. These strategies are shared with others across the country and around the world, serving as a model for democratic university-community engagement.

Academically Based Community Service (ABCS):

- Integrates service with research, teaching, and learning
- Works to improve the quality of life and learning in the community and the quality of learning and scholarship in the university through collaborative problem-solving, K-16+
- Fosters structural community improvement (e.g., effective public schools, neighborhood economic development)
- Emphasizes student and faculty reflection on the service experience
- Helps students become active, creative, contributing citizens of a democratic society.

Over 200 ABCS courses have been developed at Penn in a wide range of disciplines; 70-75 courses are offered annually.

University-Assisted Community Schools

A major component of the Netter Center's work is mobilizing the vast resources of the University to help transform traditional public schools into innovative university-assisted community schools (UACS). University-assisted community schools educate, engage, empower, and serve not only students, but also all other members of the community in which the school is located.

UACS focus on the school as the core institution, the “hub,” for community engagement and democratic development, as well as link school day and after school curricula to solve locally identified, real-world, community problems. UACS engage universities as lead partners in providing academic, human, and material resources. A mutually beneficial approach simultaneously improves the quality of life and learning in the community while advancing the academic mission of the University.

The Netter Center’s University-Assisted Community Schools include 8 schools in West Philadelphia: Comegys School (grades K-8), Lea School (K-8), Mitchell School (K-8), Hamilton School (K-8), Shoemaker-Mastery (7-12), Robeson High School, Sayre High School, and West Philadelphia High School. Additional partners schools include West Catholic, Global Leadership Academy-Southwest, School of the Future, and John Bartram High School. Programming occurs during the school day, after school, evenings, Saturdays, and summers. Each UACS school site has, at minimum, one full-time staff site director or program director who works closely with the school and the community to determine activities that best serve the specific needs and interests of that area. In addition to organizing and overseeing the programs, community school site directors serve as liaisons between the University and the school, as well as between school day teachers and the afterschool program. University students taking ABCS courses, work-study students, and student volunteers provide vital support, serving as tutors, mentors, classroom fellows, or activity and project leaders.

Democratic Anchor Institution Strategy

The Netter Center views ABCS and UACS as core to a comprehensive anchor institution strategy, which involves engaging the full range of institutional and intellectual resources of the university in democratic, significant and sustained partnership with the community. The Netter Center works in close partnership with the Office of Executive Vice President on issues of community economic development that help Penn function as an anchor institution working democratically with its neighbors.

Netter Center University-Assisted Community School Programs

Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative (AUNI)

AUNI promotes nutrition education, food access, and healthy lifestyles and helps build a sustainable food system. AUNI offers hands-on school day, after school, and summer learning opportunities for nearly 6,000 students at 16 Philadelphia public and charter schools; job-training and youth leadership development; and nutrition lessons and activities for adult community members at 22 community and senior centers.

Bridges to Wealth

Bridges to Wealth (B2W) is an innovative financial empowerment program focused on students, parents, and local community partners. B2W’s goal is to increase the wealth-generating capabilities of families living in underserved neighborhoods. Founded by Wharton Professor Keith Weigelt and Dr. Jill Bazelon in 2012, B2W became a program of the Netter Center in 2019.

College Access and Career Readiness (CACR)

The Netter Center’s College Access and Career Readiness (CACR) program partners with high schools in West Philadelphia to support students in attaining high school, post-secondary, and career success. CACR activities include mentorship, internships, academic and professional skill building, college and career exposure, and college application coaching.

Community School Student Partnerships (CSSP)

CSSP is an undergraduate student organization that works in close collaboration with the Netter Center's university-assisted community schools to provide academic and cultural enrichment to children and families in West Philadelphia.

Dr. Bennett L. Johnson, Jr. Sayre Health Center

Founded through a partnership among the Netter Center, Perelman School of Medicine, Sayre High School, and community members, the Sayre Health Center opened in fall 2007 as a Federally Qualified Health Center. Clinical and educational health promotion services are provided by physicians in Penn's Departments of Medicine and Community Health, as well as by students from the Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Dental Medicine, and Social Policy and Practice. Students from the School of Arts and Sciences and Graduate School of Education also work with Sayre youth as they learn about health careers and the delivery of basic medical services.

Extended Learning: After School and Summer Programs

Extended learning programs meet the community's need for safe spaces that provide academic, cultural, and recreational activities for young people as well as adults from 3pm to 6pm after school and from 8am to 3pm during the summer. Programs for K-8 students focus on tutoring, arts, culture, recreation, and project-based learning. High school programs combine academic support, college and career mentoring, extracurricular activities, and real-world job experiences through paid internships.

Health Sciences Educational Pipeline Program

The Educational Pipeline Program is a partnership between the Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM) and the Netter Center that works closely with the School of Veterinary Medicine, the Masters of Public Health Program, the Vagelos Program in Life Sciences & Management (new in 2021-2022), and West Philadelphia high schools to provide mentorship and education for high school students while exposing them to a variety of careers in medicine and healthcare. Fall programming is integrated into the high school science curriculum during the school day, and the spring component operates at PSOM and the Veterinary School as an afterschool program.

Moelis Access Science (MAS)

MAS supports partnerships that improve science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education in K-12 classrooms, as well as undergraduate and graduate STEM education at Penn. MAS Fellows work with public school teachers to make the best use of their standardized science and math materials while also helping teachers take advantage of a variety of supplemental resources to support hands-on and inquiry-based learning.

OurSpace

OurSpace is an initiative of the Netter Center that collaborates with Penn's LGBT Center to provide a safe and inclusive space for queer youth and allies across the Philadelphia District.

Penn Reading Initiative (PRI)

PRI is a Penn student-run tutoring program that was developed through an ABCS course taught by Professor Bill Labov and the Penn Linguistics Laboratory. PRI tutors use *The Reading Road*, a curriculum that includes lessons, stories, and games designed to engage the interest of struggling readers in urban elementary schools.

Rebel Ventures

This youth-run healthy food business supported by the Netter Center has been creating Rebel Crumbles, a fruit-filled whole grain-rich breakfast cake, with approximately 1.4 million Crumbles served to Philadelphia school children. This is the first youth-created food served in a school meals program in any major city.

Social, Emotional and Mental Wellness

The Netter Center has been collaborating with CHOP and its Healthier Together initiative to develop a place-based comprehensive approach to social, emotional and mental wellness in University-Assisted Community Schools that supports students, caregivers, and staff. 2020-21 served as a pilot year for programming at Comegys and Hamilton K-8 schools, which included grief and trauma peer support groups and family empowerment workshops through a contract with Uplift Center for Grieving Children. This programming expanded to include Lea School in fall 2021.

University-Assisted Community Schools Nights

UACS Nights offers free academic, cultural and recreational activities for community adults in the evenings at a West Philadelphia school. Programs promote health and wellness, education, art, and financial management. Most programs are held weekly, several run simultaneously, and are taught by Penn volunteers and community members.

University-Assisted Community Schools Sports

This program supports and enhances UACS through sports programming and support of school-day physical education, health education classes, and school nurses. The programs also provide sexual health education, sports and structure play components for existing after school and summer programs, and leadership activities for high school students.

Urban Arts, Culture, and Humanities Partnership Program (UACHP)

UACHP utilizes arts, culture, and humanities to build bridges that connect Penn faculty and students, teachers, students, and parents in the public schools, neighbors of all ages and backgrounds, and local artists and performers.

Young Quakers Community Athletics (YQCA)

The YQCA program is a collaboration between the Netter Center and Penn Athletics, creating mutually beneficial partnerships between Penn's intercollegiate varsity athletic teams and West Philadelphia public schools. YQCA works with 4th-8th grade students from UACS and engages them with Penn's varsity lacrosse, track & field, and (new in 2021) basketball teams.

More Netter Center Initiatives

Nonprofit Institute and Nonprofit Connect

The Nonprofit Institute, hosted biannually, provides free workshops for members of local nonprofits and faith-based communities. Penn staff and community leaders teach a series of courses in nonprofit administration, evaluation, legal issues, grant writing, finances, human resource management, and publicity over six days. Nonprofit Connect is a new Penn student-led program that was first piloted in summer 2020 in response to nonprofit needs identified during the pandemic. Working with Wharton Student Life, the program mobilizes university resources, particularly undergraduate and graduate students, to offer general consulting, organizational, and administrative support to local nonprofits.

Penn Leads the Vote

Penn Leads the Vote (PLTV) is a student-run, non-partisan program that increases voter engagement and voting while advancing Penn's role of supporting the democratic and civic engagement of Penn students. PLTV was established in 2004 and operated by Fox Leadership until 2014. PLTV was reestablished in 2018 in the Netter Center in collaboration with the Office of Government and Community Affairs.

Penn Program for Public Service (PPPS) Summer Internship

The PPPS Summer Internship is comprised of 10 to 12 outstanding undergraduates each summer. Students participate in a research seminar, write a research paper, live together, and work at least twenty hours a week with an ongoing Netter Center partner in the West Philadelphia community.

Penn Volunteers in Public Service (Penn VIPS)

Penn VIPS provides a vehicle for staff, faculty, alumni, and the West Philadelphia community to work together on community service activities and events. Penn VIPS coordinates on-going service opportunities and a series of supply drives throughout the year, as well as the Nonprofit Institute described above.

Provost's Faculty Fellows at the Netter Center

Working closely with the Netter Center Director, the Senior Faculty Fellow, and other colleagues, the Provost's Faculty Fellows develop and disseminate their own ABCS teaching and research, as well as work to increase Penn faculty involvement in ABCS teaching and related research projects.

Provost's Graduate Academic Engagement Fellowship at the Netter Center

This two-year Fellowship is open to PhD students across all schools and fields at Penn. Fellows are outstanding students whose scholarship significantly involves Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) and related activities. The Fellowship involves participation in a faculty-student seminar on community-engaged research and teaching, a research fund for each Fellow over the two years, support to attend and present at conferences, and a full fellowship in the students' second year to continue studies and/or work on their dissertation.

Provost/ Netter Center Faculty-Community Partnership Award

This annual award recognizes Faculty-Community Partnership projects with a \$10,000 award (\$5,000 to the faculty member and \$5,000 to the community partner). The purpose of the award is to recognize sustained and productive university/community partnerships and to develop or enhance ongoing work.

Evaluation

The director of evaluation works with a team of undergraduate and graduate students, in addition to a distinguished committee of faculty advisors, on evaluating various aspects of the University-Assisted Community Schools and Academically Based Community Service programs.

Regional, National, & Global Reach

The Netter Center works to create and strengthen local, regional, national, and international networks of institutions of higher education committed to engagement with their local schools and communities. In particular, the Netter Center's university-assisted community school (UACS) model has been adapted nationally and internationally. Each year, the Netter Center hosts colleagues from higher education, K-12 education, and community partners from around the country and globe who are interested in learning from and adapting the Center's work.

Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND)

Begun in 1987, and housed at the Netter Center, PHENND is a consortium of more than 25 colleges and universities in the greater Philadelphia area. PHENND works with its member institutions to develop sustained and mutually beneficial community-based service-learning partnerships. PHENND's K-16 Partnerships Network brings together higher education faculty and staff who work with public school partners, as well as with the School District of Philadelphia.

National Replication and Outreach of University-Assisted Community Schools

From 1994-2004, the Center received funding from foundations and the federal government to promote the replication of the university-assisted community school model. Twenty-three higher educational institutions received funding and another 75 institutions were trained on the model.

Part of the Netter Center endowment is designated to fund regional training centers on university-assisted community schools on three-year cycles. University of Oklahoma-Tulsa served as the site of the first regional training center in 2008. Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) was selected as the second regional training center in 2011, and University of Connecticut was selected as the third regional training center in 2014. UCLA Center for Community Schooling became the fourth regional training center in 2017, and Binghamton University, part of the State University of New York (SUNY), was selected as the fifth site in 2020.

The Netter Center has also sought to support national networks in support of community schools. In 1997, it was one of the founding partners of the Coalition for Community Schools, housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership, to promote and advance community schools. With a growing number of colleges and universities engaged in community schools, the Netter Center worked with the Coalition to develop a University-Assisted Community Schools Network in 2015 to share resources, best practices, and advance the work; approximately 70 higher education institutions are now part of this network.

Anchor Institutions Task Force (AITF)

The Netter Center director chairs the Anchor Institutions Task Force (AITF), a network of approximately 1,000 leaders promoting the democratic engagement of anchor institutions—including colleges, universities, hospitals, community foundations, libraries, arts institutions, and other anchors—in community and economic development. The AITF is designed to develop and disseminate knowledge and function as an advocacy and movement building organization to create and advance democratic, mutually beneficial anchor institution-community partnerships. All members share a deep commitment to the following values: equity and social justice, democracy and democratic practice, place and community, collaboration and partnership. AITF is administered by Marga, Inc. (www.margainc.com/initiatives/aitf/)

The International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy (IC) and the Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education

The Netter Center Director is Chair of the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy (IC), which, since 1999, has worked with the Council of Europe (CoE) and seeks to explain and advance the contributions of higher education to democracy on community college, college and university campuses, their local communities and the wider society. It is comprised of the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, and the Magna Charta Observatory. The U.S. is represented by a Steering Committee from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Council on Education, Anchor Institutions Task Force, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Campus Compact, Democracy Commitment, and NASPA-Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education. The Organization of American States and the International Association of Universities joined the overall cooperation between the IC and CoE in April 2018 and October 2019, respectively, which was recently named the Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education. (www.internationalconsortium.org)

Netter Center By the Numbers

Penn Student Engagement

- In 2019-2020, Penn's **73** Academically-Based Community Service (ABCS) courses run through the Netter Center, taught by **65** faculty and instructors, engaged approximately **1850** students (undergraduate and graduate) in University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS), non-profits and community-based organizations in West Philadelphia and Philadelphia. These courses were offered across **10** of Penn's 12 schools and **18** departments within the Schools of Arts & Sciences.
- The Netter Center engages approximately **3,000** Penn students with its programs, primarily at UACS. In 2019-2020, this included:
 - **1850** ABCS students
 - **236** community service work-study interns
 - **137** non-work-study interns
 - **936** student volunteers

West Philadelphia University-Assisted Community Schools

- The Netter Center serves over **3700** K-12 students in schools in West and Southwest Philadelphia through its University-Assisted Community School (UACS) programs. The Netter Center's **8** UACS are characterized as schools that have a full-time staff Site Director or Program Director and have comprehensive school day, afterschool, and summer programming: Hamilton School (K-8), Mitchell School (K-8), Comegys School (K-8), Lea School (K-8), Mastery Shoemaker Campus (7-12), Paul Robeson, Sayre and West Philadelphia High Schools. Additional partner schools (with select programming) include Global Leadership Academy Southwest, West Catholic High School, School of the Future, and John Bartram High School.
 - In a typical academic year, approximately **500-800** K-12 students are enrolled in after school programs across the eight UACS sites, and **500-800** students are enrolled in summer programming (including approximately **200-300** high school students in paid WorkReady internships).
- UACS Nights offers free academic, cultural and recreational activities for community adults in the evenings and weekends. Each activity averages between 10 and 30 weekly participants, with special programs averaging 20-35 participants each. In 2020-2021, with both virtual and some physically distanced outdoor events, UACS Nights averaged **100** total regular participants each week across all activities. Over 500 community members are on the UACS Nights participants' list.

Local Nonprofits and Communities of Faith

- The Nonprofit Institute, hosted twice a year, provides free workshops for members of local nonprofits and faith-based communities. Approximately **50** participants participate annually.
- Nonprofit Connect, first piloted in summer 2020 in response to nonprofit needs during the pandemic, matches civic-oriented Wharton student organizations and individual Penn volunteers with local nonprofits for pro bono consulting and project support. In fall 2021, **17** Wharton student groups and an additional **30** individual student volunteers and **20** local nonprofit agencies expressed interest in participating and are being connected.
- The Netter Center convenes a Communities of Faith Coalition with representatives from **26** faith-based institutions across West and Southwest Philadelphia.

Staffing

- The Netter Center employs **50** full-time staff to support its initiatives on campus and in the community. Staff are funded through a combination of government grants, private gifts, and university support.
- The Netter Center also hires many part-time staff to work in the Center's grant-funded after school and summer programs at university-assisted community schools. In 2019-2020, the Netter Center employed **over 200** part-time staff, the majority of whom are from West Philadelphia.