

## 21st Century Declaration of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities

AMERICA HAS LONG BEEN AN URBANIZED NATION, and urban areas house many of our nation's greatest universities. Today, more than two-thirds of America's population and two-thirds of its jobs are based in major metropolitan areas, which produce 75 percent of the nation's output. Our future will be shaped by the success of metropolitan hubs as sources of innovation, creativity, health care, transportation, employment, governance and education.

In recent years, many of America's central cities have revitalized dramatically. After World War II, America's central cities increasingly became home to poor and minority citizens. As middle class and affluent residents were attracted to the suburbs, many assumed that America's urban centers had no real future. Although still home to some of America's poorest individuals and some of our nation's most serious social dilemmas, central cities are reasserting themselves as national centers of business and cultural life.

Universities located in cities and in the surrounding metropolitan areas have been key players in this revitalization, and will play an even greater role in the future. As anchor institutions, they are major employers and developers, they stimulate and nurture new economic enterprises, they build the workforce, and they enrich the cultural life of America's cities. They partner with government, community organizations, health care systems, public schools, not-for-profit civic groups and others to address the needs of urban residents, provide vital services and strengthen their host city's social fabric.

Urban and metropolitan universities also draw on the rich array of business, governmental, cultural and civic institutions located in urban areas to expand student learning and enhance research opportunities for faculty and students. Urban university community engagement enriches metropolitan communities while strengthening the universities' core commitment to teaching and research.

We, the leaders of urban and metropolitan universities, declare that our future as knowledge organizations will continue to be forged by sustained, reciprocal engagement with our cities. With its founding in 1989, the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities took the lead in defining the concepts of university-community engagement and stewardship of place,

driven by a commitment to knowledge exchange and reciprocity. Today, our research, teaching and engagement agendas reflect the traits and ambitions of our regions. Our intellectual capacity contributes significantly to metropolitan planning and development, the enhancement of social capital and cultural enrichment, the improvement of schools and educational outcomes, and the preparation of globally connected, action-oriented civic leaders.

Therefore, as members of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, we agree to continue to build both our cities and higher education institutions by acting collectively to:

- Provide conference and publication venues to identify and disseminate best practices in engagement and university-community collaboration
- Advocate for federal and state policies and programs that recognize and enhance the role of universities in the future development of our major metropolitan areas and the education of their residents
- Educate students to understand the importance of civic engagement by citizens and the importance of America's cities to the nation's future
- Support professional development for university leaders that will strengthen their ability to build the partnerships that our cities and our nation require
- Focus on the power of university-community engagement to address many of the economic, cultural, racial, social and governance issues of our cities
- Use the intellectual resources of the university to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth
- Work collaboratively with public schools to foster community partnerships that enhance the opportunities for urban children to graduate from high school prepared for post-secondary education