

Trinity College and The Learning Corridor: A Small, Urban Liberal Arts College Launches a Public Magnet School Campus

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Abstract

The Learning Corridor is a 16-acre campus adjoining Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, containing four public schools and other neighborhood services. The Corridor was developed by a consortium of Trinity College and four other institutions. This paper describes the political and financial history and decision-making behind The Learning Corridor. It includes lessons about what small urban colleges can accomplish, as well as the power of pragmatism, the importance of evaluation, and the challenges of sustainability.

In 2000, The Learning Corridor opened its doors next to Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. The Learning Corridor is a 16-acre campus that includes four interdistrict magnet schools: an early childhood and elementary grade Montessori school; an arts, science, and math middle school; a high school arts academy; and a high school academy of math and science. The schools, together with a multipurpose theater, substantial community space, neighborhood family center, and Boys and Girls Club, were built on a recovered urban brownfield that had previously been an abandoned bus garage.

The Learning Corridor campus physically bridges Trinity College with Hartford Hospital, an affiliated psychiatric hospital, and the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. The vision for The Learning Corridor combines neighborhood development and a collaborative academic approach to produce a significant educational and community resource.

The concept of regional collaboration among educational institutions is by no means unique to Trinity. Collaborations called "knowledge corridors" have been established and advertised for sites among the 26 colleges and universities between Hartford, Connecticut and Northampton, Massachusetts; the area between Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England; and between Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra State, India. Four universities in Michigan have a collaboration called a Life Sciences Corridor; five educational institutions in St. Louis have a Biotechnology Corridor; and four colleges and a university in Western Massachusetts jointly fund a collaborative

entity called Five Colleges, Incorporated. Yet none of these interinstitutional collaborations explicitly link public schooling to colleges or universities.

Partnerships between precollegiate schools and institutions of higher education extend back to 1896, with the founding by John Dewey of what are now called the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. Today hundreds of universities have formal partnerships (as opposed to running schools as laboratories) with local public and private schools located on or nearby their campuses. One of the best-known programs links the University of Pennsylvania with 12 community schools in the West Philadelphia Improvement Corps (WEPIC). The WEPIC Web site notes 23 other university programs designed to replicate it (www.upenn.edu/ccp/WEPIC/replication/project.html).

But while interinstitutional collaborations and university-school partnerships exist separately, very few exist in combination. Fewer still host schools combining neighborhood, city, and regional outreach. This paper describes how and why Trinity College came to be associated with this effort, as well as the challenges faced and still ahead.

Historical Background of the Initiative

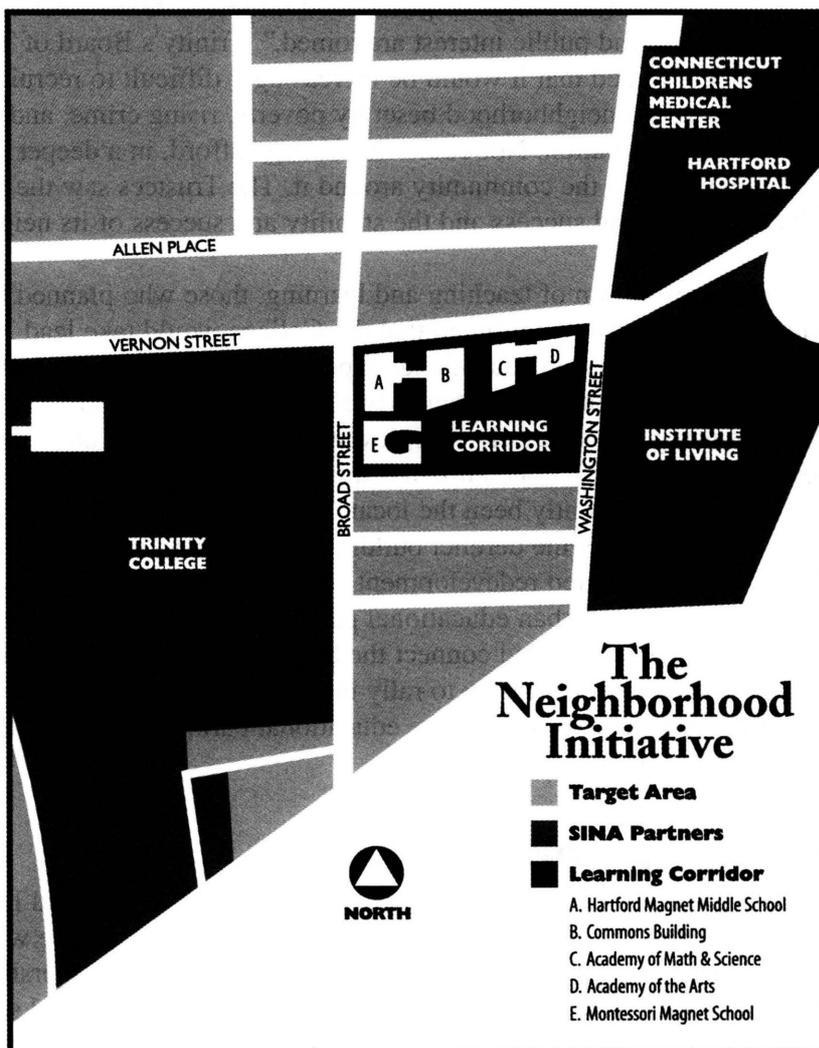
Trinity College was founded in 1823. Its founders chose to locate in Hartford, Connecticut because of the greater generosity of the city's residents in pledging support for the institution. Yet, after the better part of two centuries as a successful small liberal arts college, Trinity was struggling by the early 1990s with its location in the heart of one of the poorest neighborhoods in the second poorest small city in America. The Board of Trustees even began to explore the feasibility of moving the College out of the city. Instead, Trinity decided to stay in Hartford and reconnect with its neighborhood. This fundamental change of focus continues to mark the College today.

The College's administration, and many among the faculty, came to realize that the College's future was inextricably linked to the health of its urban surroundings. Trinity was also aware of the involvement of universities and colleges in the urban renewal of cities like Worcester, Providence, and Philadelphia. The College had already joined with its neighboring institutions—three hospitals and a public television station—to form a community partnership called the Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA). The College also created a small, strategic Office of Community and Institutional Relations that focused on neighborhood efforts and reported to the president. Then, working through SINA, Trinity pulled together the elements of a neighborhood initiative that would eventually involve housing and home ownership, streetscape improvements, public safety, information technology, economic development, and employment. But the single most significant external evidence of Trinity's urban engagement would be development of the over \$100 million Learning Corridor.

The Learning Corridor plan began by drawing together several struggling magnet school proposals. Some of these proposed schools had been authorized for state assistance, but separately none had moved forward. Plans for The Learning Corridor scaled up this vision by proposing to relocate a struggling public Montessori

elementary school and the educationally successful but limited facilities of a regional public school arts academy, both in the city. A new neighborhood middle school and regional magnet math and science high school program were then added to the educational mix. United by common core facilities and shared services, The Learning Corridor was designed to physically connect the Trinity College, Hartford Hospital, and the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center through and in the neighborhood. It would also be a symbolic corridor where four public magnet schools would come to serve some 1,500 children from Hartford and surrounding districts. The Learning Corridor would also include a family resource center, youth recreation center, and fully accessible play-scape that would be used primarily by neighborhood residents (see Corrigan 2000 for the importance of joining school programs to integrated family-centered services). A theater and shared community facilities for children and their families provided resources useful both in the neighborhood and to the city at large.

Figure 1: A map of the Learning Corridor and other neighborhood initiatives



http://www.trincoll.edu/pub/city/trinity_sina.html

Support for The Learning Corridor also grew as a result of litigation (*Sheff vs. O'Neill*) challenging racial, ethnic, economic, and educational isolation in Greater Hartford. When the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled for the plaintiffs in the 1996 *Sheff* decision, the justices did not specify how the state should remedy the problem. Some school desegregation advocates pushed to redraw school district boundaries between the predominantly Black and Latino city and its suburbs. Others insisted that change be sought through education programs. And opponents raised concerns about local control. These disputes were eventually resolved in a political compromise featuring interdistrict magnet schools, with special curricular themes and resources designed to attract both urban and suburban youth on a voluntary basis.

Trinity's Motivations

Why did a small liberal arts college choose to engage the city and change its vision of the campus and community? Evan Dobelle, chosen as president in 1995 largely to lead this change, said it well: "Trinity's neighborhood initiative shows what can happen when self-interest and public interest are joined." Trinity's Board of Trustees and administration determined that it would be increasingly difficult to recruit students and faculty to a college in a neighborhood beset by poverty, rising crime, and accelerating physical deterioration. Nor could the College afford, in a deeper sense, to turn its back on conditions in the community around it. The Trustees saw the links between Trinity's stability and success and the stability and success of its neighbors.

Because Trinity is an institution of teaching and learning, those who planned the overall Neighborhood Initiative determined that the College would take lead responsibility for efforts to change educational expectations and outcomes in the community. Other SINA institutions, particularly Hartford Hospital, took lead responsibility for housing and streetscape improvements. For Trinity, attention quickly focused on replacing a long-abandoned urban brownfield on one block adjacent to the College. The site had most recently been the location of the metropolitan bus service garage. Taken over by the state, the derelict buildings had been removed, but environmental concerns prevented redevelopment of the site. Cleaning up the site for safe reuse and constructing an urban educational park would help stabilize the neighborhood, buffer the College, and connect the SINA partners. The Learning Corridor was also seen as an opportunity to rally the community and help facilitate Trinity student and faculty engagement at the educational park, as well as in the neighborhood and in the city.

Decision Making Processes

Trinity, by itself, could not take on organizational responsibility or financial liability for The Learning Corridor that might jeopardize or even appear to compete with its core mission. Therefore, broader partnerships were essential. These partnerships would broaden responsibility, deepen the base of support and advocacy, and strengthen sustainability in the community. It seemed particularly important that this *not* be seen

as the College's expansion or intrusion into the neighborhood (see Newby 1997 for a description of community concerns about such actions).

Meeting community expectations and doubts, where so much else had failed, also meant that momentum was needed to accomplish change. It seemed unlikely to those leading this effort that such momentum could be built or sustained by relying on the usual structures of government or community organizing. State government was too remote for direct management. Regional governance was nonexistent. Municipal and school governance in Hartford was already strained to the point of crisis. And community organizations were too small and disconnected, and politically too factionalized. Instead, it was believed that flexibility, even at the risk of no small measure of adhocism, would be more useful than forcing any single model or ideology of community organization. The resulting mix of connections might better be termed a set of relationships than a set of partnerships (Bringle and Hatcher 2002).

Consequently, The Learning Corridor and Trinity's larger Neighborhood Initiative reflect several basic strategies:

- **Institutional capacity-building to manage and sustain engagement.** For the College to undertake leadership on The Learning Corridor project, and similarly for SINA and the other SINA partners to take leadership in other aspects of the Neighborhood Initiative, new institutional capacity was needed. Trinity chose to locate institutional responsibility more centrally and invested in a small but strategic Office of Community and Institutional Relations, with top-level administrative status, reporting directly to the College president. This office was staffed with individuals experienced in public affairs and community organizing. Faculty and students already engaged in various neighborhood and city projects were informally networked with this new institutional capacity.
- **Connection and collaboration with committed neighborhood groups and leaders, institutional partners and government.** While the College took the lead in The Learning Corridor, it was deliberately developed not as a Trinity project. Instead, as already noted, the preexisting, but significantly stepped up, Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA) became the organizing and financing means to accomplish The Learning Corridor. SINA is a nonprofit community development corporation operationally funded through annual assessments paid by Trinity College and its institutional neighbors: Hartford Hospital, Institute for Living, and Connecticut Children's Medical Center. SINA, and especially Trinity and Hartford Hospital, worked to improve connections in the city with the Mayor, local legislative delegation, and school superintendent as well as with the state's congressional delegation, Governor, Commissioner of Education, and legislative leaders. Equally important, Trinity took the lead in SINA to organize informational, planning, and advisory activities through existing community organizations in the neighborhood. A *New York Times* article described this alliance as "pairing two seemingly disparate groups: the power brokers and the people movers" (Stowe 2000).

- **Project sequencing to allow early and regular showcasing and celebration of progress.** The history of urban initiatives in America is fitful and uneven at best, with too little sustained engagement. City residents learned long ago that the rhetoric too often fails to translate into action. From its very public groundbreaking in 1997 to the very public celebration of its opening in 2000, The Learning Corridor celebrated its progress in visible ways. Public officials and neighborhood residents were a part of every event. Benchmarking events were staged to maximize media coverage, publicized to the community and usually designed to involve neighborhood children. Dedication of the new Boys & Girls Club, the first completed phase of The Learning Corridor, featured a visit by then General Colin Powell. The groundbreaking and dedication ceremonies for the whole Learning Corridor each took on the character of a community fiesta. Even the foundation-funded acquisition of new books for the Middle School library was an occasion for neighborhood children to participate in book selection. Each step along the way was a cause to celebrate progress and reassure residents, as well as other stakeholders. No wonder one neighborhood parent wrote in a note left in the door of the Boys & Girls Club the night before it opened that, “I never think it would happen for my kids. Thank you.”
- **Involvement of faculty and students.** Well before planning began for The Learning Corridor, and particularly since the late 1960s, Trinity faculty and students were already undertaking various neighborhood and city projects. These activities included teaching special classes, community organizing and research, internships, and volunteering, as well as the day-to-day lives of faculty who lived in the neighborhood or city. Just as The Learning Corridor was being constructed, Trinity faculty were developing greater opportunities for community learning courses that promoted an engaged liberal arts focus for faculty and students. While undertaken by many other colleges, urban engagement by Trinity faculty and students was especially important in helping to build support and develop a programmatic focus for educational programs at The Learning Corridor, and connect that focus to the College’s core academic mission.
- **Reliance on a loose mix of community leadership and organizations.** Every community has its own politics. This was certainly true among the large number of small community organizations in The Learning Corridor neighborhood. All too often, community development initiatives become bogged down in trying to create some idealized governance superstructure. Instead, The Learning Corridor project took the neighborhood as it was, networking more informally and working with a loose mix of community leaders and organizations on the basis of specific needs and interests. From the very beginning, meetings were regularly publicized and held in a nearby church basement to keep the neighborhood informed and involved. Trinity took the lead in maintaining more formal liaisons with leaders and members of the Hartford Areas Rally Together (HART) community organization, particularly its two subgroups representing the Frog Hollow and Barry Square neighborhoods where The Learning Corridor and Neighborhood Initiative were targeted.

- **Pragmatism, flexibility, and incremental change.** The Learning Corridor changed in many ways from its inception to its operation today. Rigid adherence to a “one best way” approach would have doomed the effort long ago, not least in terms of inadequate funding. Still, changes of necessity, especially financial necessity, did compromise some of the original vision for The Learning Corridor. For example, consistent with Connecticut’s landmark *Sheff* decision on racial and educational isolation, state funding for magnet schools is limited by the proportion of resident school district students, in this case Hartford children, who may attend. Hartford converted what began as a neighborhood middle school first into an intradistrict and ultimately into an interdistrict magnet school in order to maximize state funding. Ironically, the result is lower neighborhood enrollment in the schools than originally planned. This is especially felt by the local community. Plans to rent storefront space along one side of The Learning Corridor found no ready market. This space became home to the Aetna Center for Families when it came up short on funding needed for a stand-alone building. Finally, administrative structure changed with the evolving development and growth of The Learning Corridor. Despite common facilities management, the overall educational mission of the schools is only loosely coordinated. While the original model included a strong central administrator with a clear connection to the College, in practice this evolved into fairly separate administration of each school and less articulation of programs or students among the schools. These and other accommodations along the way have compromised some of the “big picture” vision. That said, The Learning Corridor continues to evolve and is no less significant in terms of net gains in education, family services, recreation, and community use.

Financing

As previously noted, external factors have had a significant impact on funding. The Learning Corridor took off in part because it coincided with important developments in public policy. The ongoing state *Sheff* litigation raised the stakes significantly. Settlement of the *Sheff* case resulted in increased state funding for the construction and, although less so, operation of interdistrict magnet schools. This was also the period when, dissatisfied with the performance and management of the Hartford public schools, the state acted to remove local control and appoint an oversight board. Finally, the launch of “Adriaens Landing” (a politically high profile, large-scale economic redevelopment initiative in Hartford, led and financed by the state) also raised the profile of The Learning Corridor initiative. Suddenly, The Learning Corridor became part of the Governor’s much publicized urban initiatives. Thus, The Learning Corridor came to be seen as part of a larger agenda. It is likely that without these external factors, assembling construction financing would have been far more problematic.

At some \$126 million in capital costs, The Learning Corridor represents the most significant public-private educational partnership ever undertaken in Connecticut. Trinity and its SINA partners first provided seed money of \$11 million. Even as lead partner in this effort, the College’s share was a relatively modest \$6 million, but this

contribution represented a high stakes draw on endowment at the same time that Trinity was drawing on endowment to increase faculty compensation and student financial aid. Trinity also donated the land for the Boys & Girls Club, while the chair of the College's trustees and other alumni became private benefactors for the club's \$1.2 million construction. Finally, Trinity agreed to be a financial guarantor for the duration of Learning Corridor construction in order to provide a necessary inducement to the cash and credit-strapped city and its school system.

With \$12 million in state funding for limited but required environmental remediation, the old bus garage location was conveyed by the state to the city as the site for The Learning Corridor. Actual construction and equipping of the schools was overwhelmingly funded by the state at \$94.4 million while the city added \$6.3 million. Corporate and foundation support, totaling \$2.4 million, was very important in ensuring state of the art facilities, especially at the science and math academy.

Gaining capital project support proved much easier than sustaining the operation and operating costs of The Learning Corridor. Now managed by a regional educational cooperative, The Learning Corridor schools exist outside the infrastructure of any existing school district. Therefore, all of its operating costs are stand-alone costs. Furthermore, adding value in program and facility design also adds cost relative to typical per pupil expenditures. State magnet school operating grants remain inadequate, and per pupil tuition from sending school districts must be negotiated. The financial result is much less than the sum of its parts. While not unforeseen, The Learning Corridor faces an approximately \$1 million annual operating shortfall and still has no endowment. This challenge has been met, *so far*, by substantial annual fundraising, use of state construction reimbursements that would otherwise have repaid a portion of the initial SINA institutional commitments, and about \$4.1 million to date in "soft" foundation grants (particularly strategic management and capacity-building staff funded by the Kellogg Foundation).

Funders have been persuaded to invest with different strategies. For most of the private donors, it has been another way to offer stability and purpose to the College. For corporate donors, it was certainly an opportunity for recognition. Yet these companies also have a significant financial presence in Greater Hartford and saw The Learning Corridor as part of a new movement for urban revitalization. Other corporate donors identified with the workforce challenge of better educational outcomes in the poorest and poorest-performing school district in the state. And as previously noted, foundations such as the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and the Kellogg Foundation understood that initiatives like this inherently have a soft fiscal underbelly in the ongoing inadequacy of operating resources. State government, the majority financial partner, was kept at the table by publicly engaging the Governor as a prominent sponsor as well as the fortuitous legislative advocacy of the Greater Hartford-based Speaker of the House (a Trinity parent) and the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate (a Trinity alumnus and administrator). Above all, there is no way to overstate the importance of the very public and personal outreach done by Trinity

College President Evan Dobbelle in the period from 1995 to 2000. Dobbelle's understanding and previous experience in moving public policy were invaluable and highly effective.

Outcomes and Lessons Learned

The Learning Corridor is now in its fourth year of operation. Externally, a neighborhood survey in 2001 funded by the Kellogg Foundation suggested that the recently opened educational park remained an unknown for many in the community. This survey also revealed that the median duration of residence in the neighborhoods nearest to The Learning Corridor was about three years, a challenge to any effort to create enduring community relations or sustainable change. The community survey will be repeated in 2004–2005 to evaluate changes in community composition, awareness, and stability.

Internally, each of the schools at The Learning Corridor reports high parent satisfaction and good student performance. Both the Boys & Girls Club and Aetna Center for Families are oversubscribed with neighborhood participants. Better evaluation, however, remains difficult. Faced with the challenge of getting The Learning Corridor up and running, the collection of baseline data among students and in the neighborhood was not given priority. With the availability of comparative state testing data for students in the 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th grades as well as AP placement and postsecondary education for students attending the high school academies, some of the gaps in quantitative assessment are now in the process of being filled. Kellogg Foundation funds have recently supported the creation of a separate evaluation component focused on The Learning Corridor, in connection with the broader evaluation initiative begun by Trinity in 1998.

Still, what may be said of the broad lessons learned so far?

- **Small urban colleges can catalyze important changes.** Few would likely have predicted Trinity's leadership and sustained commitment in this urban engagement. The Learning Corridor shows that even a small college can create working partnerships that significantly leverage its own limited resources and catalyze change while maintaining an appropriate balance with its primary educational mission (cf. Mitchell and Levine 2001). Administrative leadership, augmented by important but limited faculty and student participation, was enough to move forward. Similarly, even a somewhat generalized acceptance of the College's external commitments on campus and among alumni can be an adequate foundation for institutional engagement. Still, the "public" in this particular public-private partnership ultimately made all the difference in terms of resources.

Community development undertaken by a liberal arts college differs in a number of ways from that of other higher education institutions. At Trinity, the administration took the largest role in developing The Learning Corridor in the absence of a graduate

faculty in education, public policy, or architecture and urban planning. Since this kind of external engagement is less organic to the historical academic mission of a small liberal arts college like Trinity, the result is a significant challenge to the faculty who now face many opportunities to rethink the relevance of their teaching and research to public education and public policy. Along with this challenge come certain institutional tensions when a private liberal arts college takes a very public position about its civic responsibility. Trinity's mission statement now articulates the virtue of preparing students "to lead examined lives that are personally satisfying, civically responsible, and socially useful," yet its institutional tradition is not that of a public or land grant institution chartered to serve the public good (Corrigan 1997). Absent a clear or longstanding mission of public service or, like that of a community college, the education of local residents (see the description of Hostos Community College in Maurrasse 2001: 145ff.), colleges like Trinity are at once more insulated from local demands and less able to respond.

Successful external engagement is not likely to be sustained without equally successful internalization, and that means change within the college or university (Walshok 1999). Thus, Trinity is beginning to adapt its traditional incentives for scholarship and teaching to fit the new institutional geography represented by The Learning Corridor and larger Neighborhood Initiative. For the College, this is a critical component required to bring reward structures and work environment into line with institutional rhetoric (O'Meara 2001). Recent efforts are focused on establishing course development and documentation/dissemination grants to support cooperative ventures that join faculty from the College and The Learning Corridor. These efforts include giving community work more prominence in annual faculty reports used to calculate merit pay increases, and discussing how to change the curriculum and teaching schedule so that they can better accommodate community engagement. For Trinity students, The Learning Corridor already provides greater involvement in volunteering and creative work-study but still less so in terms of learning and service learning. Connecting with the students and faculty at the magnet schools involves creating web-based venues to learn about events, discussing impediments posed by day and semester schedule differences, and finding other ways to surmount the challenges inherent in working with a student body that includes residents of the neighborhood but also the broader region.

- **Pragmatism and planning by doing can work, but have their limits.** There is no question that flexibility and adaptability led to success, but not without some cost. The Learning Corridor struggled and continues to struggle with the dilemma of whether to follow its vision or to follow the money. Colleges and universities have no small amount of experience relevant to this challenge. For The Learning Corridor, the availability of state magnet school funding moved its mission away from greater educational impact in the neighborhood than originally planned. In short, more magnet school funding means less neighborhood enrollment, although this is now changing a bit. As a result, the overall neighborhood benefits from the presence of the schools, but residents continue to have unmet expectations for their own

children. On the other hand, interdistrict magnet schools can have broader regional educational influence and significance. Curricular and teaching innovation at these schools influences students in the city and in a geographic region far larger than Trinity's immediate neighborhoods. This aspect of The Learning Corridor is rooted both in the tradition of laboratory schools and in the benefits of a greater experience of diversity.

Trinity's decision to step back from control has kept more institutions involved and has generally avoided the impression of the project as a "town-gown" intrusion. Here too, however, there is a cost in terms of organizational complexity and accountability. The Learning Corridor now consists of buildings and land owned by the city, houses four separate school programs, and all common facilities are managed under contract by a regional educational cooperative. It is governed by an independent board and corporation ultimately responsible for the entire campus. SINA and each of its member institutions continue to be involved as well. No wonder there is a sense, at times, that when everyone seems to be in charge, no one is in charge.

- **The Learning Corridor adds value, but time and evaluation will tell if it creates deeper, sustainable change.** The facilities, programs, teaching, and diversity available to students at The Learning Corridor are among the best in Connecticut. The Montessori early childhood and elementary school is a national model. The middle school will become the Hartford school system's first successful interdistrict magnet and an intradistrict response to the particular challenges of high urban school mobility. Enrollment demand at the part-time high school magnet arts academy and math-science academy far exceeds capacity. The nationally recognized Boys & Girls Club is already outgrowing its space. The more recently opened Center for Families provides new resources for parenting. Community use of all facilities during off-school hours is extensive.

Still, the schools continue to function too separately, offer too little enrollment for neighborhood children, and there is too little continuity of program or articulation from school to school. More directly for Trinity, The Learning Corridor and larger Neighborhood Initiative have helped rebrand the College in terms of reputation, admissions, and an expanding urban academic focus (see Trostle and Hersh 2003). Yet connections from The Learning Corridor to Trinity's primary mission of teaching and learning, while expanding, are not yet pervasive. The College recently appointed a faculty member to help develop and coordinate these types of activities.

As previously noted, evaluation efforts to identify measurable outcomes of The Learning Corridor are just beginning. Indeed, capturing the range of changes in the neighborhood heralded and precipitated by The Learning Corridor probably requires an evaluation more along the lines of a Comprehensive Community Initiative than an evaluation of The Learning Corridor alone (see ASDC 2001, Hollister and Hill 1995). Only after such an evaluation can it be said that these initiatives are having a systemic impact in the community and on the campus.

- **Sustainability remains the principal challenge.** For all of its positive impact, it is not yet clear whether The Learning Corridor represents sustainable change. Fiscally, the schools and campus remain marginal. Initial soft funding is winding down while Trinity and the other SINA institutions are clear that they cannot provide an ongoing operational subsidy. A significant gap remains between what it took to build The Learning Corridor and what it will take to build ongoing collaboration, especially in terms of greater Trinity student and faculty ownership. Early over-reliance on the personality of leadership took its toll when President Dobelle left Trinity, as did a loss of momentum during the short term of a new campus president. As the College explores how better to create curricular support and institutional incentives for collaboration, tension remains in maintaining a successful balance of institutional and academic, administrative, and faculty leadership.

Leadership changes since 2000 have influenced Trinity's involvement in The Learning Corridor and larger Neighborhood Initiative. When President Dobelle left, many on and off campus wondered if the College's commitment to community engagement might wane. This concern deepened with the reduced external presence of Dobelle's short-term successor and the limited time available to two interim presidents (the next president assumes office July 2004). Fortunately these leadership changes were buffered by ongoing administrative and trustee support for urban programs in place at the College, efforts by a cadre of committed faculty and students, and the serendipity of a key campus manager moving first to head SINA and then to become Mayor of Hartford. Continued financial support from the Kellogg Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies also strengthened and broadened academic connections to the city. All of these efforts kept urban engagement largely on track during a difficult period of leadership transition and economic stress, while demonstrating commitment on campus at The Learning Corridor and in the community.

For all the outreach into the community and pride in shared accomplishments, too much of The Learning Corridor probably remains at the treetops. Not enough has yet taken hold at a grassroots level of sustainability in, of, and by the community. As one consultant report noted, The Learning Corridor remains a beacon of hope, but still a mystery to many in the immediate community who are "waiting and watching." This is also true for many among Trinity's own students and faculty. Yet, The Learning Corridor and all aspects of Trinity's institutional and academic urban engagement have clearly created a new identity for the College with positive results in recruitment, teaching and learning—including creation of a new dually based Director of Urban Initiatives drawn from the faculty. The Learning Corridor also poses specific opportunities and challenges for a liberal arts college to become more closely involved in public education. At the same time, it is one among a broad range of urban engagements now being undertaken by the College even as Trinity also reassesses its broader academic rigor and curricular core. A small faculty and a small administration will need to be wary of being overburdened by trying to respond too broadly to pervasive needs.

In spite of its challenges, The Learning Corridor remains a remarkable achievement and a work in progress. It has helped to reanchor a troubled neighborhood, renew a sense of shared possibilities in and with the community, add immeasurably to the mix of educational opportunity as well as community services, and reshape the reputation and focus of Trinity College.

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