Academic-Corporate Relations at a Research University:
Options for Engagement Practices and Organization

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by
Robert C. Garber

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Abstract

Universities engage with corporations to pursue their missions in research, teaching, and public service. In recent years, corporations have evolved their expectations for university relations from primarily philanthropic in nature to seeking engagements with academic institutions will enhance shareholder value by contributing to business goals. The question addressed by this project was whether there are best practices in university-corporate relations that could be applied to the circumstances of New York University, a major private research university. The topic was chosen because universities have chosen a number of different models for organizing and resourcing their corporate engagement offices, and administrators at New York University were interested in understanding the choices made by peer institutions.

The research method used in this project was to interview corporate relations professionals at a variety of research universities in the United States, compare their organizations and strategies for corporate engagement with that of New York University, in the context of best practices recommended by organizations devoted to university-industry relations.

The project found that New York University’s corporate relations organization and strategy differs from industry best practices in a number of ways. Variances include the lack of a centralized database of engagement activities, the absence of an office dedicated to coordinating corporate engagements across a large and relatively
decentralized university, and an approach to partnerships that is sometimes short-term and transactional rather than long-term and strategic.

The results of the project suggested a number of specific opportunities for New York University to consider that could better align their corporate engagement enterprise with those of other research universities. By adopting successful practices used by other institutions, New York University can expect to see improvements in a number of corporate engagement metrics ranging from the number and size of research collaborations to philanthropic gifts, alumni recruitment, student internships and scholarships, and faculty consulting and sabbatical opportunities.
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Glossary

The following definitions are used in this paper:

Corporate relations. The complete set of interactions between universities and corporations. Used interchangeably in this paper with corporate engagement, although corporate relations sometimes carries the connotation of outward-directed communications or “public relations”, while corporate engagement implies the intention to actively sustain a dialogue or set of interactions. Also used interchangeably in this paper with university-industry relations.

Relationship management. The strategy of maintaining a ‘continuous level of engagement between an organization and its audience’ (Investopedia, no date). Relationship management requires ongoing communication, both to achieve goals and to avoid unexpected problems, and usually implies a strategic focus on building trust and identifying new opportunities, rather than an emphasis on individual transactions.

New York University (NYU). The private educational institution in New York City\(^1\), including more than a dozen schools, centers and institutes. For purposes of this project, the university includes the NYU School of Medicine and Tandon School of Engineering, but does not include the NYU campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai.

\(^1\) www.nyu.edu
Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Universities have long sought to achieve a balance between *independence*, as institutions dedicated to the ideals of unfettered scholarship and teaching, and *engagement*, to fulfill their mission of service. Active engagement with corporations has not historically been a prioritized institutional endeavor at many universities. Academic institutions relied on individual donors and foundations for philanthropic support. After the model for the comprehensive university spread from Western Europe to the United States in the mid-late 19th century, the role of government in support of academic research was developed, driven initially by the Morrill Act of 1862 (Committee on the Future of the Colleges of Agriculture in the Land Grant University System, 1995) and subsequently by state support of public universities.

The rapid expansion of federal support for research under the demands of World War II and the leadership of Vannevar Bush and the Office of Scientific Research and Development has been extensively documented (Kevles, 1979; Stewart, 1948; Zachary, 1999). The influence of Bush’s model for the research enterprise has endured, but the preponderance of investment in research and development in the United States has always been—and continues to be—from industrial sources (Boroush, 2016). Internal corporate investment in basic research, applied research, and the development of products and services proceeded in parallel with the growth of university-based
research, highlighted for many years by the strongly resourced and productive in-house laboratories of Bell Telephone and a number of other industrial entities (Gertner, 2013; Jackson, 1990). With the notable exceptions of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Vest, 2007) and a few other universities, direct corporate funding of academic institutions through either research or philanthropy was relatively limited--indeed, the natural focus of corporations on investing in the development of competitive products and services that generated returns to owners was long seen as different from, if not antithetical to, the ideals of basic research and open scholarship. A number of intersecting influences—from the budget pressures of the Vietnam War to the innovative creation of the Engineering Research Center and Science and Technology Research Center concept by the National Science Foundation (NSF)—pushed universities and corporations to take another look at collaborating. The Bayh-Dole act of 1980⁡ and the enactment of SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) and STTR (Small Business Technology Transfer) legislation ³ provided incentives for cooperative research agreements between universities and industry to create and exploit discoveries. However, according to the most recent available data on Research and Development expenditures at US research universities, these institutions self-report on average just 5.8% of their R&D spending coming from ‘business’ sources. This percentage is comparable to funding from state and local governments and from nonprofit sources, and an order of magnitude smaller than federal government support (National Science Foundation, 2016). It should be noted that NSF data on Higher Education Research and

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³ 15 U.S.C. §638
Development expenditures understate the extent of university-industry engagement, because flow-through of grants made by federal agencies to corporations and subcontracted to universities is reported as federal, not corporate research funding. As a consequence of the relative stagnation of non-American Recovery and Reinvestment Act federal research support since 2004 (Anonymous, 2014; Britt, 2016) and the sharp declines in the support provided to public universities by many states (Mitchell et al., 2016), a number of institutions have explored greater corporate engagement as a diversification strategy for research support, and to expand their funding portfolio.

**Statement of the Problem**

Universities and corporations want to take advantage of each other’s distinctive resources to achieve mutually beneficial goals. Pursuing the benefits of corporate engagement requires the academic partner to make decisions about how its corporate relations operation is organized and placed in its administrative structure, as well as how it is staffed and how it pursues its mission. Identifying the people, the data tools and resources, and engagement strategies that are appropriate for a specific university requires understanding the institution’s distinctive characteristics and comparing them to other research universities that have chosen different approaches. This project was designed to provide an analysis and a set of options for consideration by New York University, a comprehensive research university with campuses in New York City, Abu Dhabi and Shanghai. Interest in evaluating options for organizing its corporate

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engagement efforts came from NYU’s Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Research and the University Development and Alumni Relations and was the basis for this project.

**Research Questions**

New York University reported $22.8 million in research and development expenditures from business sources in FY2015 (National Science Foundation, 2016). This represented 3.8% of NYU’s $602 million expenditures on research and development. What should NYU’s goals for corporate engagement be, both in financial terms and by other measures? What metrics are used by other research institutions to evaluate corporate engagement? How does NYU’s current corporate relations organization differ from that at other institutions? What are best practices in university-corporate relations and how do they apply to NYU? What steps should NYU consider taking to move toward its corporate engagement goals, and how much time would be required to implement them?

**Objectives**

The first objective of this project was to develop an understanding of how corporate engagement is practiced at NYU, which is a relatively decentralized institution, and to compare the organization and processes that support corporate engagement at New York University to those at other research universities. The second objective was to prepare a set of recommendations for consideration by senior administrators at New York University, the implementation of which could support the
institution’s desire to raise the profile and effectiveness of corporate engagement. These options include organization and reporting structure, metrics and performance indicators for assessing progress towards goals, and a roadmap for implementation.

**Significance**

Corporate relationships impact many parts of a university. Private industry is by far the largest category of employer in the United States, accounting for nearly five times as many jobs as all levels of government combined (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Corporations gave colleges and universities nearly $6 billion in philanthropic gifts in 2015, representing 14.3% of all voluntary support of higher education (Council for Aid to Education, 2016). Patent licensing by corporations accounted for an additional $2.5 billion in university revenue (Association of University Technology Managers, 2015). Universities are significant customers of many corporations’ products and services, procuring everything from office supplies and foodservice to computers and telecommunication services. Yet a number of studies have reported that corporations and universities often find each other frustrating to work with: differences in culture and perceived urgency have been repeatedly cited as limitations to engagement (Bruneel et al., 2010; Perkmann and Salter, 2012). If a university can identify and implement improvements in its policies and practices for corporate engagement, the payoffs will be substantial and measureable (Daniels, 2016): recruitment opportunities and regional economic development, philanthropic gifts and research contracts, technology licensing and startup investments, representation on
university boards of trustees and corporate boards of directors, bidirectional sabbatical opportunities, and more.

**Exclusions and Limitations**

This project did not attempt to specifically explore the practice of university fundraising, also called “development” or “advancement”. Although most university staff who work in offices typically called Corporate and Foundation Relations are active in the solicitation of gifts, the goal of this project was to understand the broad spectrum of engagement opportunities and how they could be organized to best advance the strategic priorities of the university as a whole. Therefore this project did not look at best practices specifically for fundraising. Similarly, it did not investigate grant application practices. Another limitation was the absence of input from the corporate side of the relationship. The Network of Academic Corporate Relations Officers has surveyed corporate members and reported on their preferences, and a 2010 article in the *MIT Sloan Management Review* collected the perspective of corporations in nine industries on university-industry collaborations (see Literature Survey).
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Two types of literature relevant to corporate engagement practices were examined: (1) documents from professional organizations that are dedicated to the relationship between universities and corporations, and (2) literature associated with the practice of relationship management.

University-Corporate Relations

Two nonprofit organizations have sponsored research into the relationships between universities and corporations: the Network of Academic Corporate Relations Officers (NACRO)\(^5\) and the University-Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP)\(^6\). NACRO is an organization with approximately 500 individual memberships representing more than 120 institutions. NACRO promotes professional development, networking and advocacy by and on behalf of its members. Perhaps its greatest influence in corporate relations thinking has come from three white papers written by NACRO members: *Five Essential Elements of a Successful Twenty-first Century University Corporate Relations Program* (NACRO Writing Team and Benchmarking Committee, 2011), *Metrics for a Successful Twenty-first Century University Corporate Relations Program* (NACRO Benchmarking Committee, 2012) and *Engagement of Academic Corporate Relations Officers in University-Industry Centers of Research Excellence*. A

\(^5\) [www.nacrocon.org](http://www.nacrocon.org)

\(^6\) [www.uidp.org](http://www.uidp.org)
fourth NACRO document, *Elevating Corporate Relations through Institutional Commitment*, released in 2016, was labeled a position paper. Collectively, the NACRO papers were known to most of the development and corporate relations professionals interviewed for this project, at NYU and elsewhere. The *Five Essential Elements* paper is perhaps the best known. It describes a gradual but pronounced shift in corporate attitudes towards university relations from *ad hoc* and primarily philanthropic to more strategic in nature, and a change in mind-set from “donor” to “investor”. The benefits or “resources” provided to universities, according to the paper, included “gifts, research grants, royalty payments, executive education tuition, [and] gifts-in-kind”. The central message of the paper is that universities need to acknowledge this change and align their corporate relations strategy accordingly by pursuing long-term, “holistic” engagements. The word “holistic” has come to be a shorthand term for the NACRO-advocated approach to university-corporate relationships, describing a strategy that acknowledges the value of mutually beneficial interactions that are not predicated on philanthropy. “Holistic engagement” was the expression used in a presentation made in 2006 by the Hewlett-Packard executive Wayne Johnson at the National Academy of Sciences, which articulated a “crisis” in university-industry relations driven by discordant approaches to negotiations over rights to intellectual property (Johnson, 2006). Johnson’s chart was in turn based on a 2003 paper that presented Hewlett-Packard as a pioneer in university-corporate relationships (Johnson, 2003). Johnson described a continuum of university-industry engagement that ranged from Awareness through Involvement, Support, and Sponsorship, culminating in Strategic Partnership. The chart
suggests that progress along the continuum should be directional, with engagement growing through trust as well as results, and encompassing increasingly ambitious interactions and a greater number of touch points. Johnson’s chart has been widely used to represent the ideal view of university-corporate engagement. It was featured prominently in the NACRO “Five Elements” paper, and also appears in university corporate relations documents and websites. The NACRO Five Elements paper further asserts that “the amount of truly philanthropic support a university receives from a company will depend in part on the number and quality of non-philanthropic engagements.” As examples of non-philanthropic interactions that benefit both partners, the paper identified jobs, internships and fellowships for students (corporation gets recruiting opportunities), executive education (company gets employee training), research collaborations (company gets the results of research), patent licensing (company gets exploitation rights), use of on-campus facilities (company gets access to specialized equipment without purchasing it) and event sponsorship (company gets publicity). Mutuality of benefits is one of five “essential elements” identified in the paper, the other four being institutional support (emphasizing endorsement and tangible encouragement from senior leadership); a central “one-stop shopping” role for the university’s corporate relations office, also known as “concierge services”, intended to simplify interactions and minimize redundant or conflicting requests by different university staff; an integrated approach to research development whereby the office responsible for negotiating sponsored research agreements coordinates its efforts with

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corporate relations officers; and \textit{campus coordination}, which acknowledges the distinct roles that academic leadership, development professionals, and the offices of technology transfer, research administration, and the career center can each play in supporting corporate engagement efforts. The NACRO \textit{Five Elements} paper included data from a 2010 survey of corporate relations staff at 45 research universities that found a number of institutions had already recognized and acted on the changing environment of university-industry relations, notably by having the corporate relations office report to an office other than the development office. The paper concluded that traditional metrics for evaluating performance in a corporate relations organization were too short-term and too focused on “incremental revenue”, and recommended new measures based on the collaborative nature of holistic engagement.

These metrics were described in the second NACRO white paper, \textit{Metrics for a Successful Twenty-First Century Academic Corporate Relations Program}. This document presents two frameworks for measuring “progress and success” in a university corporate relations organization, and ties them to three best practices.

The first framework (see Network of Academic Corporate Relations Officers Benchmarking Committee, 2012, Figure 1) describes a cyclic process of corporate engagement:

1. Building awareness at corporations of a university’s strengths and assets
2. Creating and qualifying engagement leads
3. Identifying best opportunities for mutually-beneficial engagement
4. Creating the stages and mechanisms for developing a partnership
5. Closing deals
6. Nurturing existing relationships
7. Creating a feedback mechanism to evaluate and improve the engagement process
For each step, potential metrics were identified, with the caveat that not all will apply to any given institution, and that it’s easy to try to measure too many things.

The second framework addresses the extent and frequency of internal reporting on corporate engagement metrics. Reporting is conceptualized as a stakeholder pyramid with the most frequent and detailed reporting at the level of the corporate relations organization itself (typically weekly or monthly activity reports). The next level of stakeholders consists of “organizational peers” (for example, members of the technology transfer office or the sponsored programs office), whose collaboration with corporate relations is important but who receive less frequent and less detailed reporting on corporate interactions that are relevant to their functions. At the top of the pyramid are senior administrators who receive quarterly or annual reports on higher-level activities such as gift and sponsored research totals, CEO visits, etc. The report concludes with three best practice recommendations:

1. Establish a continuum of engagement levels, often described as “tiers”. This is identical to the concept developed by Wayne Johnson at Hewlett-Packard and previously described.
2. Establish a set of criteria or “gauges” that assign a score to each selected corporate partner and serve to prioritize the most important ones for action and resource allocation.
3. Create stewardship reports for each important corporate partner, summarizing the extent of the partnership, activity and results over the past year, and plans for the future.

The University-Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP) differs from NACRO in several respects. Instead of using a business model of individual memberships, UIDP has institutional memberships. Its roster of members is roughly 2/3 universities and 1/3 corporations. Instead of fostering corporate relations as a profession, UIDP emphasizes
understanding how university-industry engagement practices actually work. It has developed guidelines on topics such as contract terms, creating innovation centers, and best practices for bringing companies onto campus. Like NACRO, UIDP publications support the holistic, tiered engagement approach to corporate relations, which it describes as a “partnership continuum” that can evolve from transaction (defined as shared tactics) to collaboration (defined as shared ideas) to alliance (defined as shared aspirations), as the number of engagement touchpoints increase. UIDP’s brochure on university-industry partnerships enumerates dozens of examples of engagement opportunities, categorizing them as student-focused, researcher-focused, providing access to institutional resources, involving centers of excellence, and supporting economic development (Southerton et al., 2012). UIDP also created a guidebook aimed at encouraging university-industry research collaborations (University-Industry Demonstration Partnership Researcher Guidebook Working Group, 2012). The Researcher’s Guidebook specifically targeted differences between academic and corporate researchers, providing language and recommendations to bridge differences in terminology and perspective. The guidebook offered practical tips on identifying and establishing contacts, preparing research proposals, and dealing with intellectual property, export control, and publication issues.

**Relationship Management**

There is a sprawling collection of material in the business/management literature on the effective conduct of relationships to achieve desired outcomes. Some
of the literature is in conventional refereed journals, but much of it appears as white papers, advertising material, slide decks, and other informal media. For this project, a subset of management literature on the topic known as “relationship management” was reviewed, to explore the idea that universities can improve the productivity and mutual satisfaction of their relationships with corporations by adopting some of the language and habits of businesses. “Relationship management” is defined as “a strategy in which a continuous level of engagement is maintained between an organization and its audience” (Investopedia, no date). Customer relationship management, well known because of Salesforce and other software platforms that were developed to manage it, is a subset of relationship management. The essential concept driving relationship management is the theory that ongoing, targeted contact between an organization and its audience is the best way to build trust, familiarity, and sales or other forms of successful engagement. Inherent to the theory of relationship management is the idea built into the name—that relationships require, and benefit from, deliberate management. Relationship management is often conflated with public relations, but public relations has a traditional component of outwardly-projected communications that is not inherent to relationship management. As articulated by Ledingham, Bruning and colleagues, recognizing that the cultivation and development of relationships is a management activity moved it into the sphere of influence of management theory and practice, with implications for training and professionalization of its practitioners (Ledingham, 2003). At the same time, grounding relationship management in the literature of relationships invoked the dimensions of trust, openness, involvement,
investment, and commitment. Business Relationship Management (BRM) is a term that emerged from the relationship between Information Technology (IT) departments and the larger enterprises that they serve. BRM emphasizes the interactions between any shared service department (human resources, finance, etc.) and their “business partners”. The idea that these interactions can be optimized (their “business value realized”) has been championed by the Business Relationship Management Institute, Inc. and its nonprofit membership community, which seeks to professionalize the role of the business relationship manager. In this project and paper, the advantages to universities of treating their diverse interactions with corporations as relationship management opportunities are posited. By invoking the language of management and the activities that are routine in business environments—strategic planning, value realization, goal-setting, project execution, accountability, and evaluation—a university is more likely to be recognized by corporations as a thoughtful, competent partner that operates in a familiar manner, seeking to collaborate in the exchange products and services of comparable value.
Chapter 3

Methodology and Results

Methodology

The project consisted of a series of face-to-face and phone interviews with NYU staff who were identified as stakeholders in the corporate relations process, as well as with corporate relations professionals at external universities. Sixteen NYU stakeholders (Appendix 1) were interviewed based on their roles at the university, including in most cases participation in a “stakeholders council” convened to discuss corporate relations issues. More than a dozen corporate relations staff at external universities (Appendix 2) were selected for interviews based on (1) characteristics of the university (usually private, large student population, R&D expenditures among the top 100 of American research universities); (2) active participation in NACRO; or (3) previous corporate relations discussions with NYU. Interviews were open-ended, but structured to encompass a consistent set of topics. Those topics included organization of the corporate relations enterprise at the university; background and skillsets of corporate relations staff; strategies for identifying and pursuing relationships with corporations; metrics for assessing results; software systems and databases used to track corporate engagement; and facilitators of (or impediments to) success. Meeting notes were assembled and compared to published and white paper literature on university-industry relations. Options and recommendations tailored to New York University were
prepared for with NYU senior administrators and corporate relations staff, but the contents of this paper were not reviewed or vetted by NYU.

**Results and Discussion**

Findings were divided into five categories: organization and resourcing; strategies and metrics; skills and background; and coordination and communication; and predictors of success.

**Organization and Resourcing.** The data that emerged from internal and external interviews supported the observation in the corporate engagement literature that academic institutions have organized their corporate relations functions in several different ways, and that where this entity (or entities) is placed organizationally and how it is staffed reflects a university’s priorities about how it practices corporate relations. In most major research universities, there is a central office of corporate and foundation relations that is supplemented by individuals or teams who are located in decentralized units—a school, college or research center. The size of the decentralized office depended on the size and to some extent the identity of the unit. For example, a school of law or a college of the arts might perceive less opportunity for productive corporate engagement than a college of engineering, medicine or business. Thus an arts college’s development office might combine corporate and foundation relations in a single position, whereas a college of engineering might have dedicated specialists in each area of activity. The school or college development officers generally report to
that unit’s senior administrator—typically a dean—sometimes with a dotted line report to the central corporate relations office.

Five types or models were identified that collectively show the range of ways that research universities have positioned the corporate engagement responsibilities in their administrative structure. Variants exist of each type. In selecting one, a university is making a decision about how it wants to pursue corporate engagement, and how it wants to staff the corporate relations team.

Figure 1. **Model 1 for corporate relations at a university.**

Corporate relations is combined with foundation relations, and is part of an Office of Development. Example: New York University. Development officers in the corporate and foundation relations office may have responsibility for both types of engagement.
Figure 2. Model 2 for corporate relations at a university.

Corporate relations is separate from foundation relations, but both units are still part of the development office. Example: Northwestern University. In Model 2, corporate relations officers often have industry backgrounds and many have advanced degrees that may facilitate developing research collaborations.

Figure 3. Model 3 for corporate relations at a university.

Corporate relations is separate from foundation relations and is part of the research office. Example: University of California at Davis. The separation of corporate and foundation relations in this model emphasizes the importance of research collaborations in corporate engagement. Philanthropic and other types of non-research corporate engagement are coordinated with the development office. Often staffed by Ph.Ds.
Figure 4. Model 4 for corporate relations at a university.

An office of industrial liaison or industrial partnerships, focusing on research collaborations, is part of the Office of Research. Corporate and Foundation Relations are part of the Office of Development. Example: Pennsylvania State University.

Figure 5. Model 5 for corporate relations at a university.

Corporate relations is separate from foundation relations and is formally connected to both research and development offices. Example: University of Michigan, whose Business Engagement Center has been funded by both offices since its founding.
The combination of corporate with foundation relation responsibilities, in a single office and often in a single position, is still common and tends to align with an office’s focus on philanthropy, despite NACRO’s observation that corporations have moved away from unrestricted giving as their main vehicle for university relations. The most recent (2016) NACRO member survey found that slightly more than half of the 168 responding institutions placed their corporate relations office in the advancement or development organization. Less than 15% of universities reported that their corporate relations offices are part of the office of research. The University of Michigan model for centralized corporate relations, with joint funding by the offices of research and of development, has been widely noted but not often duplicated. At Michigan, there are a number of development officers in the university’s major schools, but the Business Engagement Center is a major driver of activity across the entire institution. A different kind of hybrid model is practiced at the University of Southern California (USC), which has a Central Development office that includes a Senior Executive Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations\(^8\) serving a coordination function, as well as a much larger corporate relations staff (nearly 30 FTEs) embedded in USC’s several colleges. At The Ohio State University, Purdue University, and Pennsylvania State University, an Industry Liaison Office or Office of Industrial Partnerships is part of the Office of Research and is separate from the Corporate Relations office. Among the research universities whose administrators were interviewed for this project, most have moved toward a separation

\(^8\) [http://www.usc.edu/directories/dept/univ_adv.html](http://www.usc.edu/directories/dept/univ_adv.html)
between who is responsible for raising philanthropic funds from corporations and who is responsible for managing the initiation and development of research collaborations.

An exceptionally clear presentation of one institution’s approach to corporate relations is that of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Illinois). On their website and in their annual reports, Illinois presents the Office of Corporate Relations, which reports to the Vice Chancellor for Research through an Associate Vice Chancellor for Corporate Relations and Economic Development⁹, as the hub or “gateway” to a set of “stakeholders” that are arranged in six categories (University of Illinois Office of Corporate Relations, 2015):

1. Research and targeted solutions, which includes sponsored programs, technology management, corporate contacts in “units”, and interdisciplinary research centers
2. Student engagement, which includes career services and the alumni association
3. Economic development and research park, which includes a small business incubator, the state Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and research deans
4. Branding and sponsorships, which includes advancement and the University of Illinois Foundation
5. Professional development and education, which links to academic deans but not to a centralized program for executive education
6. Innovation and technical transfer, which includes sponsored programs and the Office of Technology Management for tech transfer activities

The Illinois schema exemplifies the NACRO vision of university corporate relations as a coordinating activity that may or may not prioritize raising money as a primary measure of its success (see Strategies and metrics).

Purdue University (Purdue), whose strength in engineering has driven a longstanding tradition of corporate research collaborations, created an Office of Corporate and Global Partnerships (OCGP) in 2014 with a mission of focusing on 20-40

⁹ https://illinois.edu/assets/docs/adminorgchart.pdf
major corporate relationships\textsuperscript{10}. The OCGP is part of the Office of Research and Partnerships, and is therefore an example of Model 4. Purdue’s president has stated publicly that he believes the federal government “will not be a reliable source of dollars for the research growth to which we aspire” (Daniels, 2016). He also observed that research universities merely “pay lip service to the expansion of non-traditional partnerships,” and pointed to rapid growth in awards from industry and foundation sources as evidence of the success of Purdue’s model. Purdue’s OCGP team works closely with two university entities that serve as consulting services to business and manufacturing enterprises in Indiana: the Technical Assistance Program and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership. OCGP has Purdue faculty members in leadership and advisory positions, and actively cultivates close faculty relationships to stay informed about research interests and facilitate new collaboration opportunities with industry.

New York University has a hybrid structure for its corporate relations professionals, reflecting the decentralized nature of the institution. NYU has a central office of University Development and Alumni Relations (UDAR), which is part of the university’s advancement structure and reports to the Senior Vice President for University Development and Alumni Relations. Many of NYU’s schools, and some of its research centers, have their own corporate and/or foundation specialists, who are considered part of UDAR but who also have dotted line reporting responsibilities to their

\textsuperscript{10}David McKinnis, Purdue University, interview with the author. April 6, 2017.
respective unit administrations. A separate team is responsible for development and for corporate relations at NYU’s medical school. Research collaborations with corporations are executed by the Office of Sponsored programs, which is part of the Office of Research. NYU does not have a separate office that focuses on coordinating corporate relationships across the university.

Strategies and Metrics. Several institutions reported that they create and maintain bespoke strategies for each of the corporations with which they have, or aspire to have, substantial relationships. Responsibility for developing and maintaining these strategies resides either with a central organization (e.g. the Business Engagement Center at the University of Michigan or the Corporate Engagement Office at Ohio State University) or with the school or department that has the most substantial involvement with a given company. Representatives of some institutions stated that the effort to maintain customized strategies across the dozens of corporations that they engage with made it impractical. Others create strategies for a given tier of engagement, fine-tuning as necessary for a specific company.

A small number of institutions said that they use an algorithm to objectively or semi-objectively score their relationships with corporate partners, and thereby determine which corporations to focus on. An example of a scoring system appears in NACRO’s Metrics white paper. It assigns weights to six categories.
Table 1. System for scoring a corporation's engagement with a university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philanthropic Giving</td>
<td>Prior Fiscal Year Giving</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior 3-year Average Giving</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifetime Giving</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored Programs</td>
<td>Prior Fiscal Year Research</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior 3-year Average Research</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifetime Research</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Recruiting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VP and Higher Alumni</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hires and Co-ops</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation from Leadership</td>
<td>Prospect manager and/or leadership from key stakeholders. This may take into account geography, past partnering, or other factors not already included.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Research Agreement (MRA)</td>
<td>Signed/active</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Ranking</td>
<td>Forbes 500 List (revenues)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from NACRO Benchmarking Committee, 2012.

Note that this algorithm assigns 60% of the total score to gift and research dollars received, 20% to the number of alumni at the corporation, and the rest to a variety of factors, one of which is subjective. To convert such a weighting system to an actual algorithm, each subcategory would require normalizing to some standard (such as an average of all other companies that the university engages with) in order to assign a score.

A related document is a corporate profile. Several institutions whose corporate relations officers were interviewed for this project maintain profiles for important corporate partners. The size of the list of profiled companies tends to be in the range of 20-30, and the profile is used to summarize the scale and breadth of the relationship. Universities consider profiles to be confidential documents, but corporate relations
officers described them in interviews conducted for this project as including elements such as:

- Dollars provided by category (philanthropy, sponsored research, royalties or other licensing, gifts-in-kind, sponsorships, fellowships)
- Executive education or workforce development
- Recruiting events
- Hiring of graduates or postdocs
- Vendor relationships
- Alumni in senior positions
- Key contacts
- Relationships with faculty

Several corporate relations officers noted the effort required to assemble profile data from different sources and maintain it. Purdue University has developed a system that consolidates data from several institutional databases (Hirleman, 2015, slide 15) and presents it in customizable dashboards created in Tableau visualization software. Metrics for evaluating corporate relations offices are the subject of perennial interest and debate. Most corporate relations professionals interviewed for this project said that metrics were tracked in their office, and were used to evaluate individual as well as organizational performance. Development and advancement staffs are familiar with performance targets, which in at least some cases drive eligibility for bonuses. The NACRO paper on metrics recommended instituting a broad-based set of performance measurements reflecting a longer-term, holistic spirit of engagement that aligns with perceived corporate engagement preferences. The paper recommended consideration of more than 30 possible metrics, in six categories based on the “stage” of engagement.

11 Matthew Trampski, Purdue University, interview with the author. April 6, 2017.
### Table 2. Stages of university-corporate engagement, with sample metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement stage</th>
<th>Example of suggested metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build awareness of academic programs and offerings</td>
<td>Number of on-campus events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate and qualify new leads</td>
<td>Number of leads advancing to next stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify mutual needs and engagement opportunities</td>
<td>Significant campus visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and structure collaborations and partnerships</td>
<td>Complexity and duration of deals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close deals</td>
<td>Value of deals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steward and grow existing relationships</td>
<td>Trends in number of touch points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess and improve</td>
<td>Feedback from companies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Data from NACRO Benchmarking Committee, 2012.

An example of a university that has posted its corporate relations metrics is the University of Illinois, whose 2016-2017 strategic plan appears at the university’s website. A page called “Goals and Metrics: Corporate Relations”

12 lays out four overarching goals (increasing overall corporate engagement, supporting unit-level corporate engagement, increasing efficiency, and increasing Illinois’ engagement recognition), 15 initiatives to achieve those goals, and a total of 17 metrics. The Illinois metrics for corporate relations exemplify the broadening of engagement goals from incoming dollars to include targets that are non-financial, but still measurable.

NACRO has surveyed its members on the topic of metrics that are “most used to evaluate Corporate Relations Officers” at their institutions. The 2016 survey data showed that deals and dollars are the most common, but a variety of non-financial metrics are also in place:

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12 [http://strategicplan.illinois.edu/units/corporate-relations.html](http://strategicplan.illinois.edu/units/corporate-relations.html)
Table 3. Ranking of corporate metrics used at universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Selected as one of five “most used” metrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gift dollars committed per FY</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number, type and value of deals and/or proposals submitted</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of deals and/or proposals closed</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of significant visits to companies</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number or quality of engagement and stewardship activities</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of significant on-campus visits</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored dollars committed per FY</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value or yield of new engagements</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of company leadership involvement</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of leads advancing to next stage</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from companies</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of external and on-campus events</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from internal stakeholders</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of university leadership involvement</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of leads</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event attendance</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referrals</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NACRO 2016 Benchmarking Survey Results, Question 17*

**Skills and Background.** The origin of most university corporate relations programs in development offices has meant that fundraising skills and experience have often been prioritized. Many corporate relations professionals have built careers moving from university to university, or from universities to non-profit organizations and back again. However, industry experience and subject matter expertise is increasingly valued, particularly for corporate relations jobs that are tied to a specific university unit. For example, the University of Washington has two Directors of Industry Relations, both with Ph.D.s and years of industry experience. The director of the University of Michigan’s Business Engagement Center reports that most of the Center’s

staff have backgrounds in business or industry, not academia. Note that “industry background” does not necessarily mean technical expertise; it can also mean business development or relationship sales experience. One of the authors of the 2011 NACRO paper on corporate relations strategies measures its influence by the frequency with which she sees the priorities described in that paper appearing in job descriptions for university corporate relations jobs.

**Coordination and Communication.** Corporate engagement can be initiated (or responded to) by a number of university offices or entities, ranging from faculty to the office of technology transfer, to the office of sponsored programs, to procurement officers, to corporate relations professionals. Internal coordination is desirable for many reasons, including (1) minimizing duplicative or conflicting communication, and (2) maximizing the opportunity to pursue multiple lines of engagement or to “cross-sell” the institution. A classic consequence of poor internal coordination is the complaint by a corporate partner that it receives repeated requests for money from different university offices that don’t seem to know what the others are doing. A database system that logs corporate contacts is routine at most research universities—the 2016 NACRO member survey identified more than a dozen customer relation management systems used by their institutions, of which Advance (31%), Raiser’s Edge (27%), and

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14 Sheila Wixom, University of Michigan, interview with the author. February 21, 2017.
16 NACRO 2016 Benchmarking Survey Results, Question 19.
Salesforce (26%)\textsuperscript{17} were the most frequently cited. Several corporate relations professionals interviewed for this project cited internal communication about the goals and strategies of corporate engagement as their biggest challenge. Despite repeated efforts to educate faculty, including presentations at departmental meetings, they reported that corporate relations continues to be poorly understood at their institutions. Faculty contacts with research peers at corporations can be among the most productive avenues for initiating relationships that can be nurtured to go beyond sponsored research, but faculty are often perceived to be uninterested in supporting such efforts. Building relationships through deans and department chairs was cited as a productive approach to gaining the attention of faculty.

\textit{Predictors of Success.} In response to inquiries about how corporate relations officers felt about the relative success of their efforts, two broad patterns emerged. One was that corporate engagement was significant and growing. The other was that corporate relations activity was minor compared to other sources of institutional funding, was difficult to grow, and was relatively unimportant when compared specifically to securing support from foundations. These patterns tended to align with whether the institution had created an “industry liaison” position or unit dedicated to fostering research collaborations. Such institutions reported that they receive numerous inquiries from corporations looking for engagement. These universities also tended to have strong science and engineering faculties, so the supporting role of an industrial

\textsuperscript{17} “Blackbaud” and “Razors Edge” [sic] were listed separately; Raiser’s Edge is the donor management software of Blackbaud, so their usage numbers from the survey were combined.
liaison team was a natural correlate. Purdue University, for example, reported a 36% increase in year-over-year research awards coming from non-governmental (corporate and foundation) sources (Daniels, 2016).

Several corporate relations officers interviewed for this project emphasized the importance of expanding the measures of success to include non-financial measures. When NACRO members were asked to rate the relative importance of 12 university individuals or entities for their impact on the success of corporate relations efforts, they identified faculty and deans/department chairs as the most important, followed by senior academic leadership (chancellor, president or provost), the leadership of the development office, and the career center\(^{18}\). The same survey found that a majority of institutions had added corporate relations staff in the past three years, whereas less than 10% reported a loss of corporate relations staff\(^{19}\).

\(^{18}\) NACRO 2016 Benchmarking Survey Results, Question 23.  
\(^{19}\) NACRO 2016 Benchmarking Survey Results, Question 9.
Chapter 4

Recommendations and Conclusion

Introduction

Universities and corporations pursue relationships with one another to fulfill a variety of objectives. On the corporate side, these include outsourcing research for cost reasons or to gain access to expertise or equipment not available in-house; achieving corporate social responsibility goals; gaining access to graduates as a source of talent in a competitive marketplace or to retain valued staff who are alumni; and for staff development or executive education purposes. These are not new objectives; more than 30 years ago, Herbert Fusfield of New York University observed that “[t]he primary objective of industry in establishing university relationships is to obtain competent and adequate personnel” (Fusfield, 1983).

Universities have objectives in corporate partnerships that in many cases are complementary to those of corporations: universities have faculty, postdocs and students with expertise and research interests that may align with those of corporations but which need external funding to fuel the enterprise; universities generate graduates seeking employment; universities have instructional capacity; and many universities include job creation or economic development in their mission statements.

Traditionally, most universities focused their corporate outreach on “advancement”—often driven by geographic proximity to company facilities or by the
alumni status of senior corporate officials. In recent years, a number of universities have instituted changes in their corporate relations strategies, organization, or both. These changes were driven in part by the NACRO white papers and by best practices recommendations from the University-Industry Demonstration Partnership. Examples of best practices include simplification of terms for intellectual property licensing; managing expectations of both partners, particularly regarding missions and urgency; and establishing clear outcome goals at the beginning of a collaboration. The two organizations polled academic and corporate members, and concluded that the longstanding willingness of corporations to emphasize open-ended philanthropy in university relations had largely come to an end. Instead, corporations were seeking a more nuanced relationship that delivered measurable return on investment. This change coincided with recognition by universities that funding from state and especially federal government sources was unlikely to grow over the long term, and in many cases was in decline. Influenced by the findings of NACRO and UIDP studies, academic institutions have explored opportunities to pursue more robust corporate/industrial partnerships. Factors influencing the ability and willingness of universities to pivot towards increased corporate engagement include skillsets of frontline fundraisers, alignment of faculty research expertise with needs of potential corporate partners, cultural differences between the two worlds, and different attitudes toward intellectual property ownership and openness to publication of research findings.

New York University’s corporate relations organization currently has elements of both the traditional, philanthropically focused approach and the NACRO-driven
“holistic” approach. NYU has a central corporate and foundation relations office (UDAR) that reports to the senior development officer of the university, as well as dedicated specialists in several of the university’s professional schools, who report to their respective Deans but are considered part of the central development team. Officers in the central development office have both corporate and foundation responsibilities, and indicated in interviews that foundations consistently yield more philanthropic awards. UDAR’s performance metrics place a premium on the number and size of philanthropic dollars, and UDAR’s mission statement says that it is “dedicated to soliciting private funding necessary to support the strategic goals of New York University regarding teaching, learning and research”\(^{20}\). Contracts that authorize corporate engagements are carefully parsed to determine whether the incoming funds are treated as sponsored programs grants, or as gifts. The university tracks corporate contacts through an Advance database, but there is no overarching system that connects all of the elements relevant to corporate engagement (alumni employment, sponsored research, philanthropy, procurement, licensing royalties, executive education/workforce development, campus recruiting, internship/mentorship, and board membership). NYU has also not implemented a central concierge-style position or office whose primary function is to serve as air traffic controller, fielding incoming inquiries and directing them to appropriate faculty members or administrative offices as well as identifying and targeting corporations whose products and services align with university strengths.

\(^{20}\) [http://www.nyu.edu/about/leadership-university-administration/office-of-the-president/university-developmentandalumnirelations/university-development-and-alumni-relations----contact-list.html](http://www.nyu.edu/about/leadership-university-administration/office-of-the-president/university-developmentandalumnirelations/university-development-and-alumni-relations----contact-list.html)
Recommendations

New York University has a highly productive development operation: in 2016 it reported raising $461 million, 13th-highest among American universities (Council for Aid to Education, 2017). NYU has steadily improved its competitiveness as a research institution over the past decade, rising to rank among the top 30 in research and development expenditures, with more than $600 million spent on R&D activities in 2016. By reviewing its corporate engagement practices, NYU has the opportunity to compare its organization and resourcing for corporate engagement with those of other institutions that have made changes in recent years and reported positive results. The mutual benefits that accrue to a robust, multifaceted relationship between universities and corporations are many, including

- A flow of graduates who are ready to enter into productive careers. Such graduates are vital to the competitiveness of a corporation, and understanding the needs of employers can inform curriculum development and improve a university’s ability to compete for strong students.
- Corporations are the most important licensors of university patents. NYU has ranked #1 in licensing income over the past decade, in large part due to royalties on the autoimmune drug Remicade.21
- Research collaborations drive cross-fertilization of ideas, leveraging of facilities and equipment, and identification of talent.

A primary finding of this project is that while NYU practices the individual elements of productive corporate engagement, it does not do so in an optimally

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integrated, coordinated and strategic fashion across the university. The many impressive examples of successful corporate gifts or research agreements are just that—individual successes. Therefore, a central recommendation is that NYU consider taking several steps to move it deliberately and incrementally towards an integrated corporate engagement strategy. These actions may be categorized as

- Organization
- Collaborative institutional culture and support
- Metrics and Performance Indicators
- Portfolio management
- Evaluation of institutional assets and strengths
- Roadmap

**Organization.** A number of universities have created a role that serves as a campus-wide coordinator of coordinator of corporate relations. This position has been described as “air traffic controller”, “traffic cop”, or “concierge”. The essential responsibility is facilitation of knowledge sharing, both within the university and between the university and potential or established corporate partners. The rationale for investing in this role is that corporations—unlike individual donors, most foundations, and government agencies—can have so many touch points across the institution that it’s easy for internal communication to get lost or scrambled. Furthermore, coherent engagement strategies require someone to monitor and report on progress towards goals. The coordinator does not “own” the relationship in the sense of exclusivity or control, but accountability for the status and health of important partnerships can be a major job responsibility.
At NYU, if a coordinating position is created it could report jointly to the offices of the Senior Vice President for Development and the Senior Vice Provost for Research, to acknowledge the importance of both philanthropy and sponsored research in corporate engagement, or primarily to the Office of Research with a dotted line to the Office of Development in recognition that the bulk of corporate funding is likely to come from sponsored research collaborations.

Responsibilities of the coordinating position would include

- Developing and maintaining a list of corporations deemed to be key partners or targets, along with specific strategies for developing each relationship. These plans could include goals, responsibilities, and action plans.
- Chairing and setting the agenda for the corporate relations stakeholders’ council, which would be charged with evaluating and approving strategic plans for corporate engagement.
- Overseeing the preparation and updating of corporate profiles, which hold data about historic and current partnership activities, as well as a concise summary of the strategic plan for the company.
- Preparing and distributing stewardship reports for key corporate partners.
- Preparing and delivering briefings and talking points for senior university officials meeting with corporate officers.
- Serving as the knowledge hub for incoming corporate inquiries about where to find NYU expertise or other assets, and for internal inquiries about potential corporate engagement, particularly for research support or collaborations.
- Developing and reporting on metrics that treat corporate relationships as a business portfolio, to be managed the way a business development specialist would handle a prospect list.

If the coordinating function is created as a single position, the person serving as coordinator will have to rely for support on existing offices such as University Development and Alumni Relations, the Office of Industrial Liaison, the Office of Sponsored Programs, and school-specific development officers. Creating a coordinating position would address two of the five ‘essential elements’ of the 2011 NACRO paper: one-stop shopping and campus coordination. It is preferable that this position not
include revenue targets in the performance measures, to (1) emphasize the range of activities that contribute strategically to the university’s goals in corporate engagement; and (2) eliminate potential conflicts with NYU staff who do have fundraising targets.

A second organizational recommendation is to consider establishing discipline-specific corporate engagement specialists with subject matter expertise, either as a central “industrial liaison” unit or in schools or research centers. One such operation already in existence is the Office of Therapeutics Alliances at the NYU Langone Medical Center, staffed by five life science Ph.D.s. Another example is at the University of Washington, which has three Ph.D.s responsible for Industry Relations: one in engineering, one in health sciences, and one for university-wide initiatives. At the University of Notre Dame, the Senior Director for Corporate Relations noted that as the university works to aggressively build its research base, it has hired “relationship people” with “academic or industry backgrounds”. A third example is Pennsylvania State University, which has both a central Office of Industrial Partnerships that reports to the Vice President for Research, and “embedded” industry specialists in the Colleges of Engineering and Agriculture as well as the Materials Research Institute.22

A third organizational recommendation is to consider assigning corporate and foundation responsibilities separately among the central development staff of UDAR, rather than assigning both corporate and foundation roles. A general observation at most of the universities whose corporate relations officers were interviewed for this project is that corporate engagement is quite different than foundation work.

Corporate engagement is more about relationship management and less focused on preparing compelling funding proposals.

**Collaborative Institutional Culture and Support.** Support from senior academic officers was widely acknowledged as important among the corporate relations professionals who were interviewed, but it bears emphasizing because support can range from sporadic and superficial to active and essential. The director of the University of Michigan’s Business Engagement Center, which was cited in several of my interviews as a model for superior corporate relations, noted that the BEC was established at the specific direction of a former President of the University, and has sustained strong support from the most senior members of both the research and the development offices of that institution. Opportunities for actively demonstrating support include participating in meetings with senior corporate officers or board members, lending the prestige of their office to stewardship reports, publicly acknowledging new partnerships and research successes, and supporting the investment in positions dedicated to corporate engagement.

Institutional culture ideally consists of creating a shared sense of ownership (in the sense of accountability, not exclusivity) and commitment to the success of the corporate engagement enterprise. An important component of NACRO’s holistic approach is the large number of university functions and offices that have roles in corporate engagement, beyond the development and research organizations: executive education/workforce development, regional economic development, procurement and
vendor management, and student career development/recruitment should all feel that they have a stake in the corporate relations enterprise. Christopher Groff of Fairleigh Dickinson University has proposed creating a matrix to identify touch points for corporate engagement, with partners or prospects along one axis, and internal university units along another (Fusch, 2011). Populating the grid identifies opportunities and responsibilities. Emphasizing the range of opportunities for partnerships moves the focus away from its traditional fundraising emphasis and toward a broader sense of engagement. Several people interviewed for this project noted the importance of cultivating partnerships, sometimes for years, before moving to “the ask”. Committing to an honest self-appraisal of university strengths and deficiencies, particularly in the context of competitive or peer institutions, was noted by several corporate relations professionals (see Assets and Strengths, below).

Another element of a collaborative institutional culture is information sharing, to avoid conflicting or excessive communications with corporate partners and to advance agreed-upon strategies. All institutions whose corporate relations officers were interviewed for this project use a system that tracks contacts. As noted earlier, most (75%) of NACRO members who were surveyed reported that their institutions had such a database system; of those, more than half use either Advance or Raiser’s Edge, both of which are marketed as fundraising software. One person interviewed for this project noted that Advance’s focus on individuals made it less useful for working with corporations, and found Salesforce to be a more flexible solution for corporate relations purposes. NYU already deals with a diverse collection of database systems and
interfaces—if it moves towards a dedicated corporate relations team, it should evaluate the available options for relationship management software and consider a system that best suits the needs of corporate engagement rather than assuming that Advance is the default solution.

**Metrics and Performance Indicators.** Measuring the performance of organizations and individuals is a topic of perennial interest and discussion in corporate relations. The 2012 NACRO *Metrics* paper identified more than 30 possible measures for consideration by corporate relations offices. In NACRO’s 2016 member survey, seven metrics were ranked as “most used to evaluate Corporate Relations Officers” at their institutions: the top three were various versions of “deals and dollars”, followed by three measures of visits or engagement, followed by sponsored [research] dollars committed. Another recommendation is that NYU establish no more than 5-7 measures or performance indicators to help guide and evaluate progress towards its corporate relations goals. Best practices in management literature on performance indicators are (1) divide them roughly equally between lagging (backward looking) and leading (predictive) indicators; (2) use independent or competing indicators; and (3) avoid dependent indicators. An example of competing indicators from marketing would be cost per lead (desirable to minimize) vs. qualification rate (desirable to maximize). Another recommendation is that NYU adopt a set of performance indicators for corporate relations that can be applied to both central and unit-based offices, and that
are meaningful for gift-focused, sponsored research-focused, and other relevant activities. These metrics could include:

1. Dollars: Total value of corporate financial support to NYU (for unit staff, to their unit) over past 5 years (lagging indicator)
2. Dollars: Total value of corporate financial support to NYU/unit over past 12 months (lagging indicator)
3. Contacts: Number of corporate visits or conference calls/video conferences by NYU staff to company or by company representatives to NYU over past year, compared to average of past 3 years (leading indicator)
4. Engagement: Number of proposals submitted to corporations plus number of contracts completed, compared to average of prior 3 years (lagging indicator)
5. Touch points: Number of companies that moved up one tier of engagement, minus number that moved down (leading indicator)

Two additional performance indicators that could help benchmark NYU’s corporate engagement against other research institutions are:

6. Ranking of NYU in NSF HERD data for R&D expenditures, compared to prior year (lagging indicator)
7. Ranking of NYU in the Council for Aid to Education’s Voluntary Support of Education data, compared to prior year (lagging indicator)

Data from the medical school should be excluded from these metrics, because of the distorting impact of clinical trial contracts.

Discussions of metrics inevitably connect with issues of performance evaluation and compensation, and—in university development offices—to incentive eligibility. At some institutions, corporate relations professionals are eligible for bonuses, and in other institutions they are not. The pattern appears to be consistent with whether the focus of an office or an individual is on philanthropy or on sponsored research. If NYU adopts a portfolio management approach to corporate engagement, the first five performance indicators would apply to individuals as well as offices, if each person’s portfolio is substituted for the overall list of managed relationships.
**Portfolio Management.** NYU should consider implementing a Portfolio Management approach to the cultivation of corporate relationships. Currently, corporate engagement is driven largely by the current perceived needs of schools, as articulated by deans, department chairs, center directors, or faculty. A structured process is recommended that uses agreed-upon factors to develop and maintain a portfolio of current and aspirational corporate partners while allowing flexibility to expand or modify the list and strategies, as circumstances dictate. A simple but quantitative or semi-quantitative set of criteria should guide development of the list of prioritized corporate partners, including:

1. Scale or magnitude of recent relationship (total financial support for last 3-5 years, normalized to a 1-5 scale)
2. Strength of company as a prospective partner (average of 2a-2c)
   a. Number of NYU alumni at company (per LinkedIn profiles or alumni database, as a percentage of total employees compared to the average of all companies under consideration, on a 1-5 scale)
   b. Number of employees in New York City metropolitan area (from LinkedIn or Crain’s-style data on New York employers, compared to all companies under consideration, on a 1-5 scale)
   c. Revenue or market capitalization (from public financial data, compared to all companies under consideration, on a 1-5 scale)
3. Alignment of company with NYU assets/strengths (subjective, based on number of current touch points or NYU stakeholder council’s familiarity with corporate goals, needs and strategies, on a 1-5 scale)

The sum of the numbers assigned for criteria 1-3 is a company’s “score”, out of a possible total of 15 points. The highest-scoring companies will be assigned to one of five tiers based on the criteria in Wayne Johnson’s University Relations model, which emphasizes the number of engagement touch points. It is generally desirable to move a company in the direction of more touch points or elements of engagement, but that may not always be feasible.
A second list of corporate partners should be considered, based on business or industry sector. This would provide an additional way to identify potential partners, because there may be important relationships that would not score high enough under criteria 1-3 to make a “top 20” list, but which might represent the most important potential partnership in a given sector. Suggested sectors are:

- Healthcare, including pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, medical devices, hospitals
- Manufacturing, including fashion
- Engineering, including aerospace, electrical, biomedical, construction
- Information technology
- Financial services, including banking, real estate, insurance
- Media, including publishing, entertainment, broadcast
- Telecommunications, including cable, wireless, internet service
- Hospitality, including hotels, restaurant/foodservice, travel
- Retail

The portfolio management approach for the centralized coordination of corporate engagement at NYU can be developed by assigning companies to appropriate people for management and accountability. “Appropriate” might mean someone with subject matter expertise, or to the person managing corporate relations in the NYU unit that already enjoys a relationship with the company. The number of companies in a person’s portfolio varied considerably; 5-10 is a typical range for companies that justify intensive engagement strategies, and up to 50 where many of the companies have low levels of engagement and are not targeted for advancement through a tier system. Instead of trying to create bespoke strategies for a large number of companies, use of the NACRO-style tier system is recommended, creating strategies for each tier that can be customized as needed for a single company. Tier strategies basically consist of adding points of engagement and increasing the dollar value of existing relationships. Execution on the tiered approach to corporate engagement requires steadily increasing
knowledge of what a company wants to achieve and how the university’s assets can further those goals, as well as the converse: identifying research and fundraising needs at the university, then finding and cultivating corporations that can support those needs.

Maintaining current knowledge of existing or targeted corporate partners is an important element of portfolio management. Profiles of corporations summarize the extent of current and past engagement, the number of alumni employed and alumni in senior positions, and recent contacts or planned interactions. They are the basis for briefings in anticipation of meetings between senior representatives from the university and the company, and generally serve to university staff about plans, contacts, and activity at selected corporations. A challenge in preparing and maintaining corporate profiles at NYU is the disparate locations of data on alumni, grant and gift activity, as well as the need to update changes. Investing the effort to prepare a template that can be populated as much as possible by direct data downloads is recommended, populating it for all companies in the top two or three tiers. Profiles should be refreshed every 6-12 months to retain their value. Note that some institutions have considered but not implemented a profile system, concluding that the effort to maintain them was not justified by their relatively infrequent use. These universities tolerated the occasional need for a fire drill to pull together data in anticipation of a high-level meeting or visit.
**Evaluation of Institutional Assets and Strengths.** Corporate engagement efforts at NYU should be grounded in a candid self-evaluation of institutional strengths and gaps, including an audit of facilities and of major equipment that the university can bring to a research collaboration. The internal review should begin with the university’s strategic plan, to ground it in institutional priorities. It should include a realistic comparison of NYU’s competitive position when compared to other local institutions and peer universities nationally. It should identify faculty who have nationally- and internationally-known programs, and should include development of a thoughtful value proposition that can be shared with corporations. The value proposition can include the goals and values of the entire university, supplemented with specific information about schools, centers, departments, and individual research programs that lend themselves to external funding and collaboration. This audit process should be transparent and conducted in collaboration with representatives of all academic and administrative units. The outcome should be a concise summary of the university’s strengths and assets, together with tabular descriptions of major facilities and equipment that can be shared with interested corporate partners. A separate, non-public document can provide comparisons with competitive and peer institutions for use by corporate engagement staff.

Access to information on the research interests of university faculty is valuable for developing collaborations, particularly across disciplines where potential collaborators are less likely to know who has expertise in another field at their own—much less another—institution. A research engagement officer seeking to connect
corporations with the right researchers at their institution is a recurring user of such a database. Researcher databases and tools for discovery are part of a class of software called “research networking” and “research profiling” systems. Several dozen are characterized in Wikipedia, including many that were homegrown and several from commercial sources (InfoEd, Elsevier, Proquest) (Wikipedia, 2016). NYU has licensed Pure from Elsevier and has branded the local implementation as “NYU Scholars”. NYU Scholars is in the process of being populated for selected schools and departments. Some of its data can be pulled from university or public and private databases (Pure extracts keywords as “Fingerprints” from the titles and text of publications, but effective use will require individuals to identify keywords that describe faculty interests—some of which might not be reflected in keywords pulled algorithmically from published research or grant applications. A coordinated effort is recommended, to increase the pace of populating NYU Scholars for all schools and departments where corporate collaboration and funding is a possibility. As of March 2017, NYU Scholars had fewer than 500 profiles from tenure-track faculty in science and technology departments. NYU has approximately 1,600 tenure-track faculty. Many are not in science or technology departments, but it appears that faculty representation in NYU Scholars is incomplete even for those programs, and few profiles show evidence of customized entry of keywords. The automated Fingerprinting System has limitations in the usefulness of its output—it often produces excessively broad keywords like “genes”, “DNA”, or

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23 https://nyuscholars.nyu.edu
“proteins”. Faculty members or their designees should augment or replace the automated terms with keywords accurately reflecting their work and interests.

**Roadmap.** The framework for reviewing NYU’s corporate engagement practices and organization and implementing new practices should be executed systematically, with an agreed-upon timeline, assigned responsibilities, and deliverables. Figure 6 presents a high-level schematic of an implementation roadmap.

*Figure 6. Implementation roadmap for a corporate engagement strategy.*

Managing the process would be a core responsibility of a corporate relations coordinator. A number of actions with deliverables should be scheduled in an intensive
period of six months or so, because anticipated improvements in the effectiveness of corporate engagement depends on having clear strategies with a charter or endorsement from senior university leadership, as well as a list of corporate partners, a set of metrics, and marketing materials including the audit of assets (equipment and facilities, key laboratories). Site visits to other universities with effective corporate relations programs should be made during the process of reviewing NYU’s practices, to test assumptions by making observations and asking questions. A major decision in the first six months will be whether to implement a different contact system or CRM; its implementation would probably take a year if interfaces are built to existing systems. A review after 12 months will compare progress to plan. An important element of a 12 month review will be a decision about whether additional resourcing is justified, such as the addition of school-specific corporate relations specialists with subject matter expertise.

**Conclusion**

This research project found that New York University’s approach to corporate relations does not conform to a number of the best practices articulated by the Network of Academic Corporate Relations Officers and implemented over the past decade by many research universities. Variances include the absence of separate corporate versus foundation responsibilities in the job responsibilities of most central and unit-assigned University Development and Alumni Relations staff, and relatively few corporate relations staff with subject matter expertise. Corporate engagement at NYU has also
tended to be transactional rather than strategic. There are notable exceptions to these generalizations, and NYU’s impressive track record with research collaborations and fundraising demonstrate that the university is able to create successful partnerships and deliver compelling results. NYU has an opportunity to take its corporate engagement to another level by systematically working through a process that will result in a clarified and revitalized corporate engagement mission that can leverage the university’s powerful assemblage of talent and resources. The lessons learned from other universities suggest that assigning industry-facing roles in corporate relations to professionals with subject matter knowledge and business experience builds confidence in corporate partners that their needs and goals are well understood in the university. Creating a team that includes both business development specialists and fundraising professionals will strengthen NYU’s ability to identify and persuade corporations of the benefits of investing in partnerships with NYU. Creating a clear but flexible system of engagement tiers will establish a framework for building a collaborative institutional culture, where numerous stakeholders will be able to advance their interests and responsibilities. The tier system will also make it possible to rationally assign resources to activities intended to move a given relationship towards more touch points and a higher level of engagement, rather than treating all potential corporate relationships as identical. The result, over time, will be an elevation of corporate partnerships at NYU in dollar value, in research results, in satisfaction on both sides, and in visibility.
## Appendix 1

### New York University Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director, Corporate and Foundation Relations</td>
<td>University Development and Alumni Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate VP, Global Public Health, Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td>University Development and Alumni Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate VP for Alumni Relations</td>
<td>University Development and Alumni Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Vice Provost of Research</td>
<td>Office of the Provost</td>
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<td>Associate Vice Provost, Research Compliance and Administrator</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, Office of Sponsored Programs</td>
<td>Contract Office and Office of Sponsored Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director, Office of Industrial Liaison</td>
<td>School of Medicine, Dean's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP for Financial Operations and Treasurer</td>
<td>Procurement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant VP, Campus Services</td>
<td>Office of the EVP for Finance and Information Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant VP, Student Affairs</td>
<td>Wasserman Center for Career Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director, Innovation Venture Fund and Entrepreneurship Program</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Development, CUSP</td>
<td>Center for Urban Science and Progress and UDAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Dean of Development</td>
<td>Tandon School of Engineering and UDAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate Dean, Corporate Relations, Career Services &amp; Leadership Development</td>
<td>Stern School of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, Corporate and Foundation Relations</td>
<td>Stern School of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Development Division Director for Science, Corporation and Foundation Relations</td>
<td>NYU Langone Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, Corporate Partnerships</td>
<td>NYU Langone Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate General Counsel</td>
<td>Office of the General Counsel</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 2

### External University Interviews

<table>
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<th>University</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Notre Dame</td>
<td>Senior Director, Corporate Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>Executive Director, Business Engagement Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston University</td>
<td>Associate Director, Corporate Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple University</td>
<td>Executive Director, Temple industry Partners Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke University</td>
<td>Associate Director, Corporate Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Southern California</td>
<td>Developmental Director-Specialist, Dornsife College; Senior Executive Director, Corporate and Foundation Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue University</td>
<td>Special Adviser, Corporate and Global Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California, Riverside</td>
<td>Director of Corporate and Strategic Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania State University</td>
<td>Assistant Director, Office of Industrial Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dartmouth College</td>
<td>Senior Managing Director, Dartmouth Corporate Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Washington</td>
<td>Director of Industry Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>Associate Vice President, Industry Liaison Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Mellon University</td>
<td>Executive Director of Corporate and Institutional Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>Director, Office of Corporate Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California, Davis</td>
<td>Manager, Office of Corporate Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

Johns Hopkins University Institutional Review Board Approval

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Homewood Institutional Review Board
3400 N. Charles Street
Baltimore MD 21218-2685
410-516-6580
http://web.jhu.edu/Homewood-IRB/

Michael McCloskey, PhD
Chair

Date: February 9, 2017

PI Name: Marianne Woods
Study #: HIRB00005467
Study Name: Improving Corporate Engagement Processes at a Research University

Date of Review: 2/9/2017
Date of Approval: 2/9/2017

The Homewood IRB reviewed the information provided for the above-mentioned project and has determined that this research does not qualify as federally-regulated human subjects research, and therefore does not require IRB approval. This determination has been made with the understanding that the proposed research either (a) does not involve a systematic research investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge, or (b) does not collect identifiable private data about a human participant.

You may proceed with the study at any time. No further communications with the HIRB are necessary unless the procedures in your project are changed in such a manner that would require IRB review or approval.

Please keep this message in your files for future reference. Thank you for contacting the Homewood IRB about this research and for providing the requested information to make this determination. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Study Team Members:
Robert Garber

APPROVAL IS GRANTED UNDER THE TERMS OF FWA00005834 FEDERAL-WIDE ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE WITH DHHS REGULATIONS FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS
Works Cited


Collaborations. Georgia Tech Research Corporation on behalf of the University-Industry Demonstration Partnership.


https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_research_networking_tools_and_research_profiling_systems