

DIALOGUE

WITH DR. LLOYD A. JACOBS



DRIVING THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TOLEDO
1872

On October 31, I was joined by more than 120 members of our community for breakfast and a dialogue on the state of affairs in Toledo, including how The University of Toledo can play a role in strengthening the city's cultural opportunities, economic growth capacity and, perhaps most importantly, our own self-image. I appreciated the occasion to connect with this audience as we collaborate on Toledo's future, and I look forward to further opportunities to continue the dialogue about how we can all work together to help our community thrive.

A WAY FORWARD – Toledo: A College Town

Henry Ford is famously quoted, "If you think you can do a thing, or think you cannot, in either case, you're probably correct."

In other words, we tend to become what we think we are, what we hold ourselves out to be. If we think of ourselves as mediocre, we're likely to become that. If we think of ourselves as creative, strong and outgoing, we move in that direction.

This, I believe, is as true of individuals as it is of institutions, cities or regions. If we hold ourselves out to be a decaying Rust Belt city, I think we will continue in that direction. If we hold ourselves out to be something else, I think that literally lifts us up and moves us in that direction.

The City of Toledo is, should be, and should hold itself out to be a college town, a university town. I believe we legitimately can lay claim to that descriptor, to creating, strengthening and building on that identity. We are a University City and should think of Toledo in that way when we speak of it in our brand-

ing efforts. It speaks to a future for Toledo, creating an expectation and building on that expectation.

In one regard, this sale should be an easy one. Northwest Ohio has strong academic institutions ranging from Bowling Green State University and Owens Community College to our south to Lourdes College, Mercy College, a newly revitalized University of Toledo and other fine higher education institutions closer to home. Toledo is a University City.

But just as important as the reality is the perception. Toledo can move onto the same list as Boston, Ann Arbor and Gainesville – cities instantly associated with world-class universities, powerful educational and economical engines that drive those regions' prosperity.



Toledo can absolutely launch a successful branding effort to hold this city out to others and out to ourselves as a University City. However – particularly as leaders of this community – we must first decide to try.

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UNIVERSITY CITIES – A Thriving Economic Model

Education of a populace is probably the single most important factor in population growth. Toledo's population growth has been negative in recent years and identification of the city as a college town will help reverse that trend.

Statistics show college town populations experience widespread tangible benefits. Forbes Magazine published an article in November 2005 highlighting the economic benefits of living, working or starting a business in a college town. According to the article, cities significantly supported by universities experience greater economic growth and offer some



of the best deals in U.S. real estate.

Universities create the work force needed to enter the dynamic economies college towns create. Where there is a university, health care is stronger and

more comprehensive; technological infrastructure is better developed and more robust. University Cities more positively impact residents' lives and minds, incubating art, music and theatre in the same way they promote business and industry.

Successes are magnified as research and resource collaborations help innovators turn musings into

ideas and ideas into action plans. Hard times are softened as higher education helps communities adapt to industrial downturns or rapid economic changes.

All of these cities – Ann Arbor, Madison, Austin – benefit from the knowledge, from the collective belief, that they are university towns. Toledo has the physical tools; it has the people and the intellectual capital. All the recipe needs is that collective belief.

What we think about Toledo builds this community stronger and faster than any amount of bricks and mortar. As leaders of the community, what you think and the way you talk about Toledo carries tremendous weight. Toledo is home to a great University and to several colleges and a good neighbor to another university. We can rightly and legitimately claim to be a University City. Strengthening that identity will help create our future.



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