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## **A Study in Synergy**

### **How a university, a hospital, and a business center share everything from natural resources to intellectual capital**

Crossroads Alliance, a partnership involving a university, a corporate office park, and a hospital, is an example of how nonprofit and for-profit organizations can work together to realize better their individual missions, establish mutually beneficial arrangements, and enrich the larger community they serve. Crossroads Alliance is also a powerful reminder that the result of focused collaboration is a synergy that allows for a whole that truly is greater than the sum of its parts.

Though the alliance was established in 1992, the soil from which it grew traces to the early 1980s when Maryville University of St. Louis faced an uncertain future with virtually no endowment. The beginnings of change grew out of the collective vision of Maryville's then-president, Claudius Pritchard; the chairman of the board of trustees, Ronald Henges; and the chief executive officer of Baur Properties, Edward "Tee" Baur (who later became a Maryville trustee). These three leaders created a partnership that formed the nucleus of an endowment for the university and an educational and corporate complex with myriad opportunities for mutually beneficial relationships.

The basis of the partnership involved land. In 1957 the Society of the Sacred Heart, Maryville's founding order, purchased 300 acres of land in west St. Louis County, a mostly rural area at that time. In 1961 Maryville moved from the city of St. Louis, where it had been located for 90 years, to its new site. In 1972 ownership of the college was transferred to a lay board of trustees, and in 1981 the trustees authorized the sale of 161 acres (100 for commercial use and 61 for residential purposes) to the developer of Maryville Centre, which was Baur Properties. Maryville Centre started in 1984 with one commercial building occupied by IBM.

Today the Centre is home to approximately 40 local, national, and international business and professional organizations, including IBM, Weyerhaeuser, State Farm Mutual, Novus International, Hewlett-Packard, Maryville Technologies, Edward Jones, Solutia, Inc., Duke-Weeks Realty, and Deutsche Financial Services. Moreover, this once-rural area is now at the population center for the St. Louis metropolitan area and is located near the intersection of two major transportation arteries. Nevertheless, as originally planned, the university and office park share beautiful wooded hills containing numerous small lakes and populated by deer, turkeys, and other wildlife.

In November, 1992, when the Centre's physical development was largely complete, the partnership advanced to the next level of maturation. St. Luke's Hospital, a major regional healthcare facility located adjacent to Maryville University and the Maryville Centre, became a formal part of the collaboration with the establishment of the Crossroads Alliance. The result has fostered synergistic relationships that have already been beneficial to each member of the alliance and, even more important, hold enormous potential for future development.

The alliance's success to date stems from two essential ingredients: a shared vision on the part of the CEOs of the university, the Centre, and the hospital; and a joint commitment to common purposes. We envision an educational, corporate, and healthcare environment

in which each component recognizes the inherent limitations of functioning independently and the multiple advantages of creative and cooperative interdependence. We believe that not only will our individual interests be better served through purposeful collaboration, but greater contributions to the larger community depend upon it.

We know that a vision will be just that, and nothing more, unless there are specific purposes, jointly embraced, to animate behavior and to guide actions. We therefore agreed to coordinate activities and programs, to share physical facilities, to engage in joint policy development, and to preserve the beauty of our natural surroundings. The following are examples of specific initiatives that owe their existence to shared vision and common purposes.

### **Making the most of our setting**

To help preserve the beauty of our natural surroundings and to enhance enjoyment of it, we have created several miles of walking trails. Guests at the Centre's Marriott Hotel can walk or jog along well-maintained paths through the heavily wooded corporate complex and university grounds. The trails end at a paved quarter-mile walking/jogging track on the hospital's grounds. Common signage directs users as they enjoy flowering trees, wildlife, footbridges, and benches along the way.

Linking the three campuses in this way also helps to establish and maintain our overall identity as "the Maryville Centre." To further establish this identity and enhance its aesthetic appeal, we have developed a common form of lighting during the Christmas season. Identical trees made of strings of white lights adorn the tops of every building in the Centre as well as pedestrian areas on the ground. Along with our coordinated landscaping, these efforts create an identity, support the natural beauty of our grounds, and bring people to the Centre for such events as the Walk for Diabetes and the Turkey Trot at Thanksgiving.

### **Sharing our facilities**

There are several ways in which we make broad use of our numerous buildings and services. The university expanded and furnished its fitness center with modern exercise equipment provided by Deutsche Financial Services, the name the fitness center now bears. It is used by employees in the Centre as well as the university's students, faculty, and staff. Members of the Centre also use Maryville's gymnasium, especially for noontime basketball games and mid-day workouts. And the university has access to the office park's attractive atrium areas for special events and receptions and an auditorium in the hospital as occasions require.

Learning-based sharing of facilities is especially important. Novus International created for the university a high-tech classroom, called the Novus International Videoconferencing Center, which is located in our library. This facility lets us originate instruction on our main campus that becomes simultaneously accessible from our satellite campuses by interactive video. This set-up is particularly helpful with our weekend and evening college programs and it allows for a cost-effective and learning-effective delivery system. Equally important, in this private business and not-for-profit partnership, Novus International uses this facility to conduct videoconference sessions with its offices in Brussels and Mexico City.

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Other learning-based sharing of facilities includes access to Maryville's library, both physically and electronically. Fiber-optic and electronic cable linking the entire Centre has allowed interested corporations to access our library holdings and databases. Solutia Inc., one of the Centre's newest corporations, donated much of its hard-copy materials to Maryville so that our library may serve as a broader information center and function as a conduit for accessing information and materials.

### **Providing educational opportunities**

The fact that the office park, university, and hospital are physically contiguous creates many opportunities. Maryville students are able to participate in cooperative education and internships in a first-rate corporate setting just steps away from their classrooms. St. Luke's provides top-notch clinical experiences to students in physical therapy, occupational therapy, and nursing. This relationship played a part in the university's adding graduate programs in physical therapy, nursing, and rehabilitation counseling.

Similarly, employees of Maryville Centre and St. Luke's are able to enroll in both undergraduate and graduate programs at the university. Moreover, the university's director of corporate education works with Centre tenants to develop customized learning programs to meet specific corporate needs. As a result of relationships of this type, both individual and corporate support for the university, including student scholarships, has increased significantly.

### **Collaborating on political issues**

At its core, Crossroads Alliance was formed both to help us achieve what we could not accomplish individually and to serve better the larger community. Sharing and coordinating the development and implementation of each of our facilities master plans has enabled us to be more effective in dealing with zoning issues, requests for variances, and other political issues. We have worked together to build new roads on our property to solve traffic problems and to build new entrances to the Centre and the university that are both beautiful and functional. When Maryville wanted to become the first university in the country to have a Boys Hope Home (out of 30 such homes internationally) on campus, Crossroads Alliance helped provide the clout to overcome various obstacles. Several CEOs in the Centre serve on Maryville's Board of Trustees. Edward "Tee" Baur, developer of the Centre and trustee, successfully chaired Phase I of the university's capital campaign. Faculty members serve as consultants to some of our corporate neighbors. In short, it is synergy large and small, operating on many levels, that gives real potency to Crossroads Alliance.

### **More cases of synergy in action**

In addition to what has been described already, the following three examples of what is in place, in progress, and in planning illustrate how we are faring.

**In place:** Edward Jones, a leading international brokerage headquartered in St. Louis, has an established presence in the Centre. Maryville's School of Business and Edward Jones have collaborated on a program that has surpassed both organizations' expectations. Each semester approximately ten students are personally selected by faculty and Edward

Jones officials for an intensive training and educational program. These students participate in the customer-service-representative training program along with Edward Jones' own new hires. Edward Jones conducts the training and testing exclusively. But in addition to the 40 hours per week this program requires (for 15 weeks), a faculty member from the School of Business supervises the students' work and integrates it with academic assignments, including the development of a business-competency portfolio. Students receive 10 hours of credit for this work in addition to being required to enroll in one other course to preserve full-time status.

Not only are the participating students compensated by Edward Jones during this program, but over 90 percent are hired by Edward Jones. This initiative has received stellar marks from everyone involved, including the CEO of Edward Jones, the business faculty, and the students completing the program.

**In progress:** Solutia Inc., an international chemical company spun off from Monsanto, relocated to the Centre in September, 1999. About a year and a half beforehand, Solutia officials met with Maryville deans and other officials to explore the basis for a partnership that would be consistent with the aims of Crossroads Alliance. Members of the group came up with a long and substantial list of possible cooperative arrangements, which they then divided into short- and long-term objectives complete with contact persons for each from both Maryville and Solutia. Among the arrangements, now in various stages of development or exploration, are:

- Mentoring programs, shadow days, and internships for Maryville students.
- An approach to classroom learning whereby Maryville would dedicate space for satellite-based (distance) learning and Solutia would supply the content via a service that beams diverse business content 12 hours a day, five days a week.
- Shared facilities, including lecture halls, meeting rooms, and spaces for athletic events.
- Programs through which personnel at Solutia will bring technical and commercial expertise to augment classroom instruction as guest lecturers, case study presenters, and adjunct professors.
- Prior-learning assessment and degree-completion programs orchestrated by Maryville.

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**In planning:** Finally, after a highly favorable review by consultants we engaged to conduct a feasibility study, we are pursuing the possibility of a major new joint venture between Maryville University and St. Luke's Hospital. Our plan, pending resolution of funding issues, is to build a state-of-the-art wellness center on university property that would be owned, financed, and operated through a 50-50 partnership between the university and the hospital.

The wellness center would house all but critical-care rehabilitation activities of the hospital along with parts of the university's physical therapy, occupational therapy, and nursing programs. It would also create opportunities for joint research projects, new academic programs (sports medicine, for example), and memberships for employees of Crossroads Alliance institutions as well as area residents.

In sum, 20 years ago Maryville's future was unclear and its endowment nonexistent. Now our future, while not without challenges, seems secure, and we enjoy a \$42-million endowment. Without doubt, a major reason for this difference is the partnership established

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in the early 1980s between Maryville University and Maryville Centre, which matured in 1992 into Crossroads Alliance.

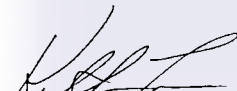
The alliance's continuing success is due to two things: the shared vision and the mutual commitment of the leader of each member of the alliance to look beyond self-interest and recognize the value of collaboration to the community as a whole. It helps as well that we enjoy good communication among neighboring organizations, share knowledge of available resources, and give public recognition to each partner's contributions. All of this is what we attempted to capture in our mission statement, which is reproduced below.




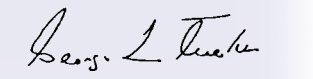
Crossroads  
Alliance

## Mission Statement

**T**he entities comprising the Crossroads Alliance (Maryville University, Maryville Centre and St. Luke's Hospital) agree to take advantage of each other's adjacency in order to work together in a synergistic fashion for the betterment of each individually, the group as a whole, and the larger community we serve. We agree to seek opportunities to work together through the coordination and sharing of various physical facilities as well as through joint policy development, programs and activities. We further resolve to communicate the fruits of these endeavors to the broader St. Louis community in the hope of becoming a model for other corporate, educational and not-for-profit partnerships.

  
Keith Lovin, President  
Maryville University

  
Edward T. Baur, Chairman  
Baur Properties, Inc.  
Developer of Maryville Centre

  
George L. Tucker, M.D., President and CEO  
St. Luke's Hospital

**Dr. Keith Lovin** has been president since 1992 of Maryville University of St. Louis, an institution of 3,060 students. ■