



## UTC 2.0 to Explore Town/Gown Collaborations for Sustainability

Registration has opened for Urban Thinkers Campus 2.0, to be held August 24–26 at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Innovation Campus Conference Center.

Mayors, university presidents and chancellors, students, researchers, innovators, architects, engineers, food science and housing experts, municipal finance and planning authorities, infrastructure and sustainability personnel will be on hand to strategize for the long-term sustainable development of small and mid-size cities in collaboration with their resident universities. While the primary focus is on BIG 10 Academic Conference cities and universities, civic leaders, academics, elected officials, students, and interested individuals from around the country and world are being invited as well.

Significant discounts are being accorded those who register early, with special discounts for groups of four or more and for students. [Click here to access the registration page.](#)

Among the speakers and facilitators of Urban Thinkers Campus 2.0 are **Neil Peirce**, founder and editor in chief of *Citiscope*; **Ed Mazria**, internationally recognized architect, author, researcher, and educator and founder of Architecture 2030; **Philip Enquist**, award-winning head of urban planning and design at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; **Jeffrey Soule**, Director of Outreach and International Programs of the American Planning Association; **Jim Cramer**, former CEO of the American Institute of Architects and founder of the Design Futures Council; **Timothy Kenny**, Executive Director of the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority; **Jerry and Renee Cornett**, owners and operators of Lakehouse Farm and Prairie Plate Restaurant; **Mary Ferdig**, president of Sustainability Leadership Institute; **Jim Powell**, professor of natural



Illustration by Brett Ryder for Middlebury College

## URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS 2.0

resource policy, sustainability, and public administration at the University of Alaska Southeast; and many others.

The format of the conference will include both plenary sessions and break-out conversations, where topics such as innovations in municipal finance, governance and leadership, new methodologies for metrics, elder populations, resilience and disaster mitigation, urban development and climate change, design and planning for community sustainability, food, workforce housing, and others will be explored.

Today, with federal and state governments often gridlocked, cities find themselves to be the vanguard in addressing immediate effects of climate change, population migration and growth, and infrastructure modernization in the United States. Mayors and city engineers, planners and managers now face frontline and more urgent demands with fewer resources to address them. Universities, on the other hand, are virtual laboratories of Big Data, technological breakthroughs, and innovative sustainability research and modeling.

Our Urban Thinkers Campus

proposes to find common ground among a select number of universities and their host cities on best practices and ways to collaborate, support, and strategize for long-term sustainability, resilience, and high qualities of life.

The conference in August is intended to be the first of many, establishing a consortium that will continue learning and growing, becoming a voice for influencing public policy in a long-term, sustainable manner. It is hoped each city and university partnership will have ripple effects throughout their respective regions and states.

The Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities is one of two U.S. hosts for this year’s Urban Thinkers Campus conferences. The Urban Thinkers Campus model is an initiative of UN-Habitat’s World Urban Campaign (WUC), conceived in 2014 as an open space for critical exchange between all stakeholders and partners to promote sustainable urbanization. It is also envisaged as a platform to advocate enlightened planning and design of our cities and propose solutions in addressing challenges to urban futures. As such, the conference will take as guidance the New Urban Agenda established at Habitat III last year, as well as the Paris Climate Agreement and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information, [visit the website](#), still in development.

## Enquiry and analysis of year-round food hub progresses



Few aspects of our lives exhibit such cognitive dissonance as food. We need fresh, wholesome nutrition, but we are programmed to opt for fast, cheap, processed, often harmful food.

Transforming our food paradigm in Southeast Nebraska has been just one of the key avenues of exploration for the steering committee established to study how a year-round food hub and public market might impact the Lincoln region, its food producers, processors, distributors and consumers. The study is being conducted under a grant provided by the USDA.

The economic and social benefits of such an enterprise are widely accepted, and the timing appears to be opportune to create a regional food hub and public market. One venue being considered is Pershing Auditorium in Lincoln.

The committee has been working continuously with a wide range of stakeholders, from food study groups and wholesalers, to producers and consumers, institutions and food policy advocates.

Members of the steering committee have visited vibrant, growing year-round public markets inavenport, Iowa, Kansas City, Missouri, Raleigh, N.C., and other cities.

“There is an ever-strengthening trend towards growing food locally, and purchasing and consuming locally grown food across the nation,” said Donna Woudenberg, committee member and Programs & Operations Manager at the Joslyn Institute. “Lincoln is no exception.”

In fact, consumers have become more willing to pay higher prices for locally grown food, she said.

The effects of climate change on small and mid-size farms, food deserts, distribution systems, means of transforming our consciousness about food, cutting food waste, feeding the hungry, commercial kitchens and food processing are all part of the study.

Surveys of wholesalers, producers, consumers, food policy advocates and others are being conducted as the study continues through next September.



## Food for Thought - A Rescued Food Experience

Join Saving Grace as it kicks off a new event series, Food for Thought – A Rescued Food Experience., 6–8 pm, Thursday, July 27 at Eat Fit Go, 4909 S. 135th St., Omaha. Sample Eat Fit Go cuisine that is being given a second life through Saving Grace’s perishable food rescue program. Hear from Erik Bird, Eat Fit Go’s chief attitude officer, on how eating healthy and donating excess foods also helps keep the environment healthy. Learn how you can partner with Saving Grace to target hunger and food waste in our community. Tickets are \$30 (\$15 tax deductible), and seating is limited. [Click here](#) to register.



## #LincolnPublicMarket Join Our Growing Social Media Campaign

In an effort to provide a vital resource for everything related to Nebraska food—from farmers to cooking tips, from farmer’s markets to food distribution information, from local foods vendors to nonprofits feeding the hungry—the Joslyn Institute has undertaken a new social media campaign. We have a [Facebook](#) page and [Twitter](#) page, and we’re encouraging all our friends to “like” us on Facebook, “follow” us on Twitter and to use the hashtag #LincolnPublicMarket when posting anything related to Nebraska foods. We hope you’ll join us in making this campaign useful and relevant for all interested in Nebraska foods.

## Call for volunteers for Urban Thinkers Campus

We are looking for a few dozen students who are interested in helping out at our Urban Thinkers Campus, August 24–26 at Innovation Campus in Lincoln for a free registration and a small stipend and a lot of exposure to sustainability leaders and innovators, architects, engineers, civic leaders, researchers, and others. Most of these volunteer opportunities will be for 2 to 4 hours each day, so the time commitment is not huge. Please visit [www.volunteersignup.org/LWMEW](http://www.volunteersignup.org/LWMEW) to volunteer.

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