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Registration Opens for Urban Thinkers Campus 2.0

Focus to be on University-City Opportunities for Resilience, Quality of Life

Invitations are being sent and registration has begun for the Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities' Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC) 2.0, to be held in Lincoln August 24–26, 2017, at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Innovation Campus. Significant discounts are being offered during pre-registration for individuals, groups, and students. Registration is being done through Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/urban-thinkers-campus-20-tickets-34696193248>

Cities and universities within the BIG 10 Academic Conference are being accorded priority status for invitations to the UTC, which will address how these particular cities and their resident universities can collaborate, support and strategize for a high quality of life. Students, academics, elected officials, community leaders and city employees, and interested individuals throughout the BIG 10 region and elsewhere are welcome to register and attend as well.

At **Urban Thinkers Campus 2.0: The City We Need**, mayors, engineers, planners, architects, food producers and distributors, legislators, among many others, will discuss resilience, long-term sustainability, and new approaches to communication, community engagement and finance, leadership, metrics and data, and many other issues, with experts, scientists, researchers and students. Perhaps most importantly participants will explore how cities and universities can work together to achieve best practices and a stronger voice in influencing and driving public policy and quality of life in the upper Midwest and Northeast.

Professor Richard Florida, urban thinker and Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, has said that universities are the key to a creative economy, being “engines of innovation”. And recently, they have become key contributors to urban and regional development and sustainability.

Cities are the vanguard in addressing immediate effects of climate change, population migration and growth, and infrastructure modernization in the United States. Amidst a general atmosphere of federal and state political deadlock, cities 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. The Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities proposes to find common ground among this select number of universities and their host cities at its UTC in August.

The Roles and Opportunities for Small and Mid-size Cities in Town/Gown Relationships: Actionable Urban/Rural Planning for the New Urban Agenda is the topic of the conference. Among speakers and facilitators at the conference will be Philip Enquist, partner in charge of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's highly lauded Global City Design Practice; Edward Mazria, founder of the path-breaking Architecture 2030 and and revolutionary Zero Cities Project, among others; Jeffrey Soule, Director of Outreach and International Programs for the American Planning Association; Jim Cramer, former CEO of the American Institute of Architects and founder of the Leadership Summit on Sustainable Design, The Design Futures Council and Greenway Group; and Neal Peirce, author of *Century of the City: No Time To Lose* and founder of Citiscope.

The August conference is intended to be the first of many, and will establish the agenda going forward. The Joslyn Institute has plans to build on this consortium of cities and universities, holding meetings in each of the Big 10 cities in the future, with the organizing and administrative help of the Joslyn Institute, and eventually creating a "ripple effect" with other cities and colleges in their regions and states, as well as the interdependent rural areas. In terms of format, UTC 2.0 will have a series plenary sessions as well as concurrent focus group "conversations", each centered around such strategies as shared learning, communications, data and metrics, research and innovation, among others. University/city, university/university, city/city, urban/rural, university/city/rural connections and interdependencies will inform the explorations.

Since the Middle Ages town/gown relationships sometimes have been adversarial and often disassociated enterprises, in part because of their divergent priorities, different languages and different governing systems. Today, such relationships can be not just conciliatory but fruitful collaborations. A recent federal effort to promote greater collaboration established the MetroLabs Network in 2015, with incentives for the development of "smart city" and high-tech projects in a number of selected city/university partnerships to address such issues as transportation, housing, wage inequality, energy, and more.

The Joslyn Institute's Urban Thinkers Campus 2.0 goes far beyond the "smart city" concept to embrace not just technological collaborations, but to include four other domains of sustainability: socio-cultural, environmental, economic and public policy.

A major goal of the UTC 2.0 will be to utilize the Paris Climate Agreement, UN-Habitat's Sustainability Development Goals, and the recent Habitat III New Urban Agenda report as foundational materials for the conference and considerations of a long-term consortium of the 14 Big 10 universities and their home cities.

More information is available on the Joslyn Institute's UTC 2.0 website: <http://www.joslynutc.org/utc2.html>

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