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## Albion College Study: Exploring Economic Development Opportunities

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**Albion College Study:**  
**Exploring Economic Development Opportunities**

September 4, 2008

by

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## **Albion College Study**

### **Introduction**

Small town America is not what it used to be. In the past, small towns had booming economies, but today many of those same towns struggle with a loss in industry and a lack of sufficient jobs. Small towns are often dependent on one main industry, and if that industry struggles then so will the town. More specifically, Albion College is located in a town that is experiencing these same issues. Albion had a long history of being a foundry town with the last foundry, Harvard Industries, closing approximately five years ago. In an attempt to try and help, college administrators approached George Erickcek, of the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, and asked him to do a study regarding the idea of small town colleges engaging in economic development efforts. As being both an Albion College student and an intern of Mr. Erickcek, I was placed on this project and took great interest in what it had to offer.

A small town college's image is influenced directly by the town it is located in, especially if the town is not a suburb of a larger city. If the town is healthy and lively then it makes the college look that much more appealing, but if the town is tired and depressed then it can have an adverse effect on the college. College students are going to spend time in the town, whether for social reasons or for a trip to the grocery store. So this explains why colleges are influenced by their towns, even though they may have their own campus and environment.

Since Albion College is located in a depressed town, numerous members of the college care about the townspeople and want to see the local economy improve. College

administrators are, also, concerned that the depressed town may deter prospective students from wanting to attend the college. Taking this information into consideration, Mr. Erickcek and I developed two methods for trying to improve the image of Albion. First of all, the current economic impact that the college has on Calhoun County needs to be determined. Secondly, recommendations will be made for how Albion College could possibly try to amend the economic and social environment that confronts both the college and the city.

## **Background**

### *Albion College*

Albion College is a liberal arts institution located in Albion, MI. The college has an enrollment of 1,950 and employs roughly 570 faculty and staff members. The Carl A. Gerstacker Institute for Professional Management, the Fritz Shurmur Education Institute, the Gerald R. Ford Institute for Public Policy and Service, and the newly renovated science complex are all key programs and facilities that could play an integral role in improving the economic and social situation in Albion. For example, all these institutes and facilities could be used to develop a business incubator for student entrepreneurs.

### *City of Albion*

#### *Brief History*

If someone were to drive through Albion today it would appear much different than it did a number of years ago. The town used to be a booming industrial town with a strong tie to manufacturing. The town has always had a very diverse population base; the

foundry industry attracted people from all cultures and backgrounds. Unfortunately, as the years went on the manufacturing industry started to have a stronger presence overseas, and many of the companies that were located in Albion found themselves in trouble. The many companies either left town or went out of business. Since Albion's business environment and major employment source were centered around manufacturing, the town fell into a fairly severe depression. People who once made a good living working in the factories found themselves out of a job and without the proper skills necessary to land another job with a similar pay scale. The lack of employment opportunities for townspeople had a devastating effect on the town and caused a socioeconomic divide between the people of the college and the town. Today, the town has attracted a few new companies to call Albion home, but it is still in the recovery phase and the monetary divide is still present.

### *Demographics*

The city of Albion, which is located in the south-central region of the state, has a very diverse makeup. As of the 2000 Census, the total population was 9,144, with 61% of the population being White and 33% being African American. The town has a per capita income of \$14,165 compared to \$21,587 nationwide, and 15% of families live below the poverty level. Even more alarming are the 39% of families with a female householder, no husband present, and a child under the age of 18 struggle below the poverty level. And nearly 51% of families with a female householder, no husband present, and a child under the age of 5 are below the poverty level. 82.8% percent of residents have attained at least a high school diploma or its equivalent and 15.5% of the population hold a bachelor's

degree or higher. Albion has 90.6% of all housing units occupied, leaving 9.4% vacant. Of those occupied housing units, 59.1% are owner-occupied and 40.9% are renter-occupied. The demographics of Albion are not encouraging, but the information does illustrate the need for intervention and change. (Source: 2000 Census)

### *Population Trends*

Since 1990 the city of Albion has seen a declining population rate.

Table 1: Population

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1990</b>
<b>Population</b>	9,167	9,144	10,066

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 Population Estimates, Census 2000, 1990 Census

The trend of declining population from 1990-2000 is troubling, but can be explained by the departure of key employment sources. However, the slight estimated increase in population from 2000-2006 is promising and suggests signs of recovery.

### *Education Measures*

Educational performance in the local schools needs improvement. Listed below are the MEAP scores (Michigan Educational Assessment Program) for high school seniors and for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at the local middle school. The MEAP scoring system is broken up into four different levels: 1 being the highest and 4 being the lowest. Levels 1 and 2 translate into meeting or exceeding standards, whereas levels 3 and 4 translate into not meeting the standards. The terms “met or exceeded” and “not met” basically translate into pass and fail.

Tables 2-4: Albion Senior High School

Class of 2007: ALBION SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL					
	math	reading	science	social studies	writing
Met or Exceeded	28.6%	43.4%	32.8%	61.7%	31.3%
Not Met	71.4%	56.6%	67.2%	38.3%	68.7%

Class of 2006: ALBION SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL					
	math	reading	science	social studies	writing
Met or Exceeded	35.8%	65.7%	47.2%	31.7%	33.3%
Not Met	64.2%	34.3%	52.8%	68.3%	66.7%

Class of 2005: ALBION SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL					
	math	reading	science	social studies	writing
Met or Exceeded	29.3%	73.8%	27.8%	23.5%	29.1%
Not Met	70.7%	26.2%	72.2%	76.5%	70.9%

Tables 5-7: Washington Gardner Middle School

Fall MEAP 2007: Grade 8 Washington Gardner Middle School					
	math	reading	science	social studies	writing
Met or Exceeded	33.3%	55.2%	45.3%	54.0%	55.2%
Not Met	66.7%	44.8%	54.7%	46.0%	44.8%

Fall MEAP 2006: Grade 8 Washington Gardner Middle School					
	math	reading	science	social studies	writing
Met or Exceeded	41.9%	56.3%	59.8%	40.2%	46.0%
Not Met	58.1%	43.7%	40.2%	59.8%	54.0%

Fall MEAP 2005: Grade 8 Washington Gardner Middle School					
	math	reading	science	social studies	writing
Met or Exceeded	35.0%	68.9%	75.7%	61.2%	66.0%
Not Met	65.0%	31.1%	24.3%	38.8%	34.0%

The numbers above are not strong, rather they are quite concerning. While, the numbers reflect an education system that needs improvement across all levels, these low test scores are also the likely outcome of the city's high poverty rates. In numerous studies, poverty has been shown to be a major factor in influencing low test scores.



In addition, low school performance negatively impacts the attractiveness of the city to potential new households. Without strong schools, it becomes a more difficult task to improve the economic vitality of the city's downtown and neighborhoods. This is true even if there is job growth because the new job holders could simply chose to live outside the city.

### *City- College Relationship*

The college continues to be a tremendous asset to the town, but the college and town are associated with two different income levels. One problem is the town-gown relationship, and as mentioned before there is a socioeconomic clash between the townspeople and college affiliates.

On the bright side, there are a number of programs and activities that connect the town and college. The people associated with the college or town may not completely understand one another, but efforts are being made by town and college leadership to bridge this gap. The college's education department, the movie theatre, a college survey, and several festivals all encourage interaction between the townspeople and college affiliates.

The Fritz Shurmur Education Institute is very involved with the Albion Public Schools. After completing their 3<sup>rd</sup> year, students in the Shurmur Institute participate in a program called Maymester, where they spend time in the local schools gaining hands on experience. They work with an assigned teacher and get the opportunity to interact with his or her students; this is not considered student teaching, however. In addition to this,

many other college students, approximately 300, participate in tutoring and mentoring programs geared for helping local elementary and high school students.

The Bohm Theatre symbolizes another interesting agreement between the college and a local business. College students are able to attend first rate movies for free at the local movie theater. The college covers the cost by drawing from several monetary sources (endowment, tuition, room and board, etc.). Many students take advantage of this opportunity, and thus increase the amount of foot traffic downtown and add a youthful image.

A few years back, two Albion College professors developed a survey that attained information relating directly to downtown Albion. The survey was administered to college students and staff (See Appendix A for survey results). It addressed the issues of how many staff members lived in town, how often do students and staff attend local restaurants or businesses, how much money do they typically spend at these downtown establishments, and what types of businesses they would be interested in seeing downtown. The survey proved to be very helpful and beneficial. It informally showed the college's impact downtown as well as expressing what businesses would attract more college staff and students to the downtown.

Albion also puts on several festivals that attract both people from the college and town. The largest of these festivals is called the Festival of the Forks, which is named for the fork in the Kalamazoo River. This festival is a joint effort put on by both the college and the town. Several institutes at the college provide student volunteers that do a variety of tasks and even gather information regarding how people feel the town is doing economically.

## Economic Impact Study

Clearly, Albion College is a major economic player in the City of Albion. Being one of the city's major employers, it brings new monies into the city which, in turn, is partially re-spent in the city. In addition to its 570 employees, the college is home for nearly 2,000 students, who also spend money in the city. In brief, the college's short-term impact on the city's economy can be broken down into four components:

1. The consumer expenditures made in the city by the college's faculty and staff.
2. The consumer expenditures made in the city by the college's students.
3. The expenditures made in the city for services and supplies required for the college's on-going operations.
4. The in-city expenditures made by the companies (and their workers) who are directly impact by the college.

<b>Economic Impact of Albion College on Calhoun County and the City of Albion</b>				
	<b>College expenditures</b>	<b>Student Expenditures</b>	<b>County Total</b>	<b>City Total</b>
<b>County Employment</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>679</b>
Direct	<b>570</b>			
Multiplier	<b>1.3</b>			<b>1.2</b>
<b>Personal income(\$ mil)</b>	<b>17.41</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>17.59</b>	<b>15.10</b>
<b>Employment by Sector</b>				
Construction	25	0	25	15
Manufacturing	3	0	3	0
Retail Trade	27	3	30	19
Information	2	0	2	0
Finance, Insurance	2	0	2	1
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	11	0	11	7
Profess, Tech Services	5	0	5	3
Admin, Waste Services	31	0	31	15
Educational Services	7	0	7	2
Health Care, Social Asst	15	1	16	13
Arts, Enter, Rec	5	0	5	2
Accom, Food Services	17	5	22	19
Other Services (excl Gov)	14	1	15	12

As shown in the table above, we estimate that 679 individuals are employed in the city due to Albion College, of which 570 persons are directly employed by the college. In other words, on average, every 10 employees at the college support roughly 2 additional workers in the City of Albion for an employment multiplier of 1.2. Most of the indirect jobs generated – those located in the city but not directly employed by the college—are due to the college’s direct purchases of goods and services from city-based suppliers, as well as, due to the consumer expenditures made by the college’s faculty and staff.

Student spending generates 11 jobs in the city.

In terms of personal income, we estimate that the college generates \$15.1 million in the city including its own wages and salaries paid out to its employees.

A brief description of the model used in estimating the college’s impact on both Calhoun County and the City of Albion is included in Appendix D.

### **College Surveys**

The main objective of this study is to recommend possible strategies for Albion College to consider in its efforts to revitalize the City of Albion. Of course, the college is not the sole institution facing such a challenge. Many small colleges are in a similar situation, and it is beneficial to learn from their efforts in tackling this issue. Two different studies have now been done by the request of Albion College. The most recent report was completed by Mr. Erickcek and I, while the other was done by the administration at Albion College in 2005 at the request of its Board of Trustees.

*2005 Report Summary* (See Appendix B for full report)

The 2005 study surveyed 73 colleges across the nation that were located in towns with populations not exceeding 25,000 and with enrollments of less than 3,000. Of the 73 colleges that were sent surveys, 17 responded. These colleges provided a diverse sample size: representing multiple regions of the United States. The study focused on gathering information regarding what economic development strategies are working for other colleges and to apply this information to Albion's own development process.

One interesting finding from the survey revealed that money seems to be an integral part of economic development. The amount of money that colleges have accessible typically determines the depth of the economic development venture that is undertaken. The notable colleges in this study all used and required a significant amount of money to fund their development projects. The survey responses also expressed the different levels of economic development that colleges are engaged in:

(College-Community Relationships in Smaller Communities)

- 1) Act as an employer for local residents and encourage student spending downtown.
- 2) Plan joint town/college meetings and engage in projects together.
- 3) Develop a combined town and college center, or nonprofit/for-profit institution, which is focused on organizing and implementing economic development projects.

Examples of Colleges Engaged in Economic Development Efforts:

- Allegheny created the Center for Economic and Environmental Development.
- Williams established a venture fund.
- Denison provided funding for a retirement center.
- Colgate developed a nonprofit institution that focuses on community development.

*Upjohn Institute Report (See Appendix C for full report)*

A little different from the previous study, this one targeted only colleges that were more similar to Albion College, so the sample size is much smaller. The main criterion for the matches included similar enrollment sizes, a small town setting, and not a suburb of a major city. Of the 15 institutions that were contacted, 10 responded and 6 responded with having engaged in development efforts: ranging from volunteering to setting up institutes designed specifically for economic development purposes. The colleges that responded represented several states and regions throughout the U.S.: Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

The institutions that are participating in development efforts have several characteristics in common. They all have a concern for their local town or county, and want to supply all the help they can that is within their means. In addition, the majority of the colleges created some sort of center or committee to specifically handle economic development issues.

Economic development is a very important task and, of course there are difficulties that come along with it. Some of the colleges mentioned that it is quite challenging to get started and to get ideas off paper and into action. Inefficient funding is one major reason why projects are so hard to get up and running. Another issue is deciding what to embark on and to not let personal issues get in the way.

Examples of Colleges' Economic Development Efforts:

- Berea's and Juniata's student entrepreneurship programs
  - Students learn about entrepreneurship and what it takes to start up a company.
- Cornell College's joint identity between two local towns, and the concept of consolidating as much as possible

- The town that Cornell College is located in is very close to another small town, so the two towns decided to develop a joint identity. They work together and use each others' positive attributes to help themselves as well.
- DePauw's student swipe card idea for downtown restaurants
  - Include downtown restaurants in the college's food program or to let students credit their college accounts when dining at these establishments.
- Using revenues from hotel/motel tax to finance projects
- Juniata's business incubator
  - Supporting and providing assistance for small business development.
- Improving tourism and changing town's image.
- Berea's training program for community leaders
  - Teach people how to be intuitive and self-sufficient when it comes to economic development.
- Cornell College's community leader breakfast
  - Community leaders get together and share ideas, say what is or is not working, and express what could be done in the future.

## **Potential Strategies**

We provide several strategies for Albion College to consider in its efforts to improve the economic and social climate in Albion. The strategies differ in the amount of time necessary to make an impact. The options include redeveloping downtown, improving the education in the area, supporting small business development.

### *Downtown Redevelopment*

Improving Albion's downtown is one possible economic development strategy. The downtown presents several challenges that give the city an unattractive image. The downtown, itself, appears to be tired and filled with marginal businesses. The majority of these businesses do not appeal to many people in the town, especially the college students. There are a couple places that continue to do well, but by themselves are not

capable of supporting a downtown. Another issue is that two streets that lead into downtown, Cass and Erie, are considered to be unsafe, especially at night, due to poor lighting. So even if the downtown was a little more attractive, people would still be discouraged from traveling to it. Also, the downtown strip has very little foot-traffic, and a big reason for that is the lack of people that live there. With very little foot-traffic along Superior, the main downtown street, there is also no presence of street trade. In order for an outside market to exist, people have to be present. Increasing the presence of people downtown could be made possible by bringing in new businesses. The income necessary to support these businesses, however, would require a major increase in population and cannot be met by student expenditures alone.

### *Previous Strategies*

Several efforts to stimulate the downtown area have been attempted before and were, unfortunately, disappointing. The developers brought in the Kids 'N' Stuff Children's Museum, which is a destination activity that aims at attracting people from outside the area. The children's museum, however, did not generate the economic spin-off effects that were hoped for. Another strategy was the implementation of downtown festivals. The Festival of the Forks, Albion Aglow Parade, and Fete de la Musique are all great events, but they only attract people downtown for a short period of time. There needs to be a location downtown that will draw people's attention and be a main attraction.



### *Possible Initiatives for Downtown Redevelopment*

One way to improve the downtown scene is to increase the amount of financial support. A downtown's monetary intake is typically amended by increasing the number of people who pass through the downtown area.

- 1) Provide student and professional housing downtown. There are approximately 100 lofts available for redevelopment in downtown Albion.
- 2) Attract new, appealing businesses to the downtown strip and use them to fill the empty storefronts.
  - a. Restaurants or coffee shops (wifi accessible)
  - b. Retail stores
- 3) Enhance the college's existing housing program to encourage new housing development on the city's Westside and downtown area.
- 4) Encourage summertime activities at the college that will attract individuals who could provide an additional source of income for the downtown.
  - a. Summer education programs for adults.
  - b. Programs that would bring back Albion alumni.
  - c. Summer programs for elementary students.

### *Problems*

The market for lofts in downtown Albion is a little questionable. If they are intended for students, then they will likely have a better chance of success because the market for lofts in Albion is "closed." That is, if they are meant to attract people from outside the area, then the money for the lofts may be better spent elsewhere. People who live in downtown lofts most likely want the downtown experience, and that is something a small town setting does not provide.

Also, the amount of income required to support additional business is very large.

The chart below exhibits the required amounts:

<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>Percent Income</b>	<b>Sales/Est.</b>	<b>Household Income</b>
Coffee shop, bakery, etc.	4%	\$286,000	\$7,836,000
Full service restaurant	4%	\$724,000	\$19,836,000

Approximately \$8 million in additional household income is necessary to support a coffee shop and nearly an additional \$20 million is needed to support a full service restaurant (Retail stores are not included because the amount necessary to support them is above \$30 million). While these numbers are high, there is one thing to keep in mind: wealthy people in Albion leave town for shopping and for nicer dining. This wealth can be redistributed back into the Albion area, but unfortunately will not be enough to support any establishment by itself. Another problem regarding restaurants or retail shops is that a large portion of their revenues would come from the college students, and the majority of students leave town for summer. Businesses would then be losing a considerable sum of revenue, and would most likely find it difficult to remain open during that time.

### *Strengthen the Relationship with Public Schools*

Albion College could strengthen its relationship between its education department and the Albion Public Schools. A lot of effort could be put into improving the performance of the town's schools, see Tables 1-7 for MEAP scores. If MEAP scores were improved then the schools would become more attractive, and the town would look

better as well. More engagement in the schools would also be beneficial for the college's education majors who would receive a great amount of experience working with the younger students. While it would take time, it is possible that a successful partnership could make Albion an education-focused community that could attract middle-income residents from the greater Jackson and Battle Creek areas.

### *Problem*

One concern with trying to strengthen the public school system is that it will have only long term effects. Time and patience are needed in order to improve performance measures. Improving education might be helpful for the students' future, but it may not help in improving the physical landscape of the town. In addition, there may be work rule issues involving the schools' unions and liability issues as more and more of Albion students would be in the schools.

### *Small Business Development*

Another option for the college is to invest in small business development. The college's various institutes and facilities could be used to support small businesses. A business incubator could be developed for students interested in entrepreneurship, and the business institute and science complex could be useful resources for these students. Albion used to have a student-run consulting firm, the Briton Business Consultants, and something like this could be redeveloped. The consulting firm could offer its services to local businesses and would be very beneficial for the students, who would gain valued

experience. Small business development may also seem as a strong option because several other colleges have engaged in this activity.

### *Problem*

Small business development may be very beneficial and productive for Albion, but it could also be very risky. A lot of money would be put into business development, but the payoffs may not be there. A couple successful businesses would not be enough to improve the city's appearance, nor its downtown development aspirations either.

### *Create a Year-round Presence for the College*

As mentioned above, one of the major difficulties in supporting higher quality downtown retail and eating establishments is that college activity declines during the summer months. A more year-round presence for the college could not only add needed financial support to new downtown eateries and restaurants, it has the potential of generating greater support for the college. Summer time activities could include:

- Education retreat activities for college alums. Such programs could enhance the college's relationship with its nearing-retirement "baby-boomer" graduates.
- Education programs for senior and life-long learners. Experts suggest that today's and tomorrow's retirees will not take the same route as previous generations. Their health will be better and their interest in learning will not diminish. Education retreats and programs may become an attractive revenue generating option for the college and, of course, help downtown.

- Business seminars and retreat activities. The college's campus is beautiful in the summer and could offer a wonderful setting for corporation retreat and conference activities.

## **Recommendation**

Albion College has the passion to help its local economy, but the college must keep in mind what its main job and objective are. The college should do nothing that will distract from its mission to provide a quality education for its students. After ensuring that the educational experience is not being hindered in any way, there are a few economic development approaches that we feel are realistic and practical.

A greater effort and financial offer could be made to encourage faculty and staff to live within the city limits. Wealthier people living in the city equates into more financial support for local businesses. Another idea aims at advocating year round activities at the college. If there are people on campus during all times of the year, especially when students are not, then businesses will have a better chance of survival. Finally, unlike the previous recommendations, this last one is focused on really helping the children in the town. The college could enhance its relationship with the Albion Public Schools and take a stronger leadership role in ensuring their educational development. Albion College could offer and provide more educational opportunities for these kids; the college could have an after school learning program or a math and science camp in the summer. If these kids are not well educated then they are going to have a very difficult time succeeding in life, and down the road this could present an even larger problem for the town. Education is the key to success, and all children deserve that

opportunity. Moreover, the college's involvement in the education experience of the city's students could enhance the city's image as an education-focused city that would be inviting to new families.

The desired timetable for the economic development project needs to be determined, however. Drastically different projects could be undertaken based on the time allotted for them. One thing to keep in mind is that a long-term project is usually aimed at trying to help the people in the town and to give them more opportunities. Short-term projects, on the other hand, are typically quick fixes for trying to improve the appearance of a town. Whatever route the college decides to go down needs to be one the administration is committed to and feels confident in.

**Appendix A**

**DOWNTOWN ALBION UTILIZATION SURVEY (Faculty and Staff)**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. As the College and the Albion Community continue to work together to improve the region’s quality of life, your input is very important. This survey will take approximately ten minutes to complete. Please read all of the questions carefully and provide honest answers. All responses are confidential – we do not ask for your name, and no information will be presented on an individual basis. Results will only be reported in aggregate (e.g., percentages, mean responses, ranges).

If you have any questions about this survey and/or your participation, please contact Dr. Al Pheley at 629-0359 or Dr. Mike Frandsen at 629-0315.

**Please return your completed survey to the Ford Institute Office in 201 Robinson Hall or the Ford Institute mailbox in the Kellogg Center.**

The focus of this survey is on the downtown area of Albion, encompassing Superior St. from W. Mulberry to W. Elm St., on the west to Eaton St., and on the east by Ionia St. It does not include the Eaton St. commercial area (McDonalds, Felpausch, etc.).

**First, please tell us a little about yourself (please remember, all information is confidential):**

1. Are you a (check only one)..... Student 0 (0.0%)  
Faculty member 35 (32.4%)  
Staff 55 (50.9%)  
Administrator 15 (13.9%)
  
2. What is your gender? (check only one) ..... Male 47 (43.5%)  
Female 59 (54.6%)
  
3. How old were you on you last birthday? ..... \_\_ \_\_ years  
.....19-25 years 7 (6.5%)  
.....26-35 years 21 (19.5%)  
.....36-45 years 29 (26.9%)  
.....46-55 years 28 (26.0%)  
.....56-65 years 16 (14.7%)  
.....66+ years 3 (2.8%)
  
4. Is your permanent address in the 49224 zip code? ..... Yes 74 (68.5%) No 32 (29.6%)
  
5. If you answered yes to question #4, how long have you lived in the 49224 zip code? .....Range; 1-53 years; Median 9 years
  
6. If you are a student, what year are you? (check only one) .....NA

**Next, please tell us about your use of the Albion downtown area:**

7. How many days in a typical month do you spend money at and/or utilize the following types of downtown Albion businesses?

Restaurants and/or bars \_\_\_ Services (e.g., hairstyling, banking, tattoos, insurance, legal) \_\_\_  
Merchandise (e.g., hardware, apparel, books, appliances, florists) \_\_\_  
Entertainment (pre-Bohm closing) \_\_\_  
Gasoline \_\_\_  
Pawn shop/used merchandise \_\_\_  
Health care (e.g., doctor, dentist, physical therapy, chiropractic, mental health) \_\_\_  
Farmer's market (during seasonal operation) \_\_\_

8. Please estimate how much money you spend at downtown merchants during a typical month.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Mean=\$137.84; Stddev=131.74; Median=\$100.00  
\$0 2 (1.9%)  
\$1-\$25 14 (13.1%)  
\$26 - \$50 20 (18.6%)  
\$51 - \$75 9 (8.3%)  
\$76 - \$100 16 (14.8%)  
\$101- \$200 26 (24.1%)  
\$201 - \$300 10 (9.2%)  
\$301 - \$400 5 (4.6%)  
\$401+ 4 (3.6%)

9. How many days in a typical month do you spend money at and/or utilize the following types of business in Jackson and/or Battle Creek?

Restaurants and/or bars \_\_\_ Services (e.g., hairstyling, banking, tattoos, insurance, legal) \_\_\_  
Merchandise (e.g., hardware, apparel, books, appliances, florists) \_\_\_  
Entertainment (pre-Bohm closing) \_\_\_  
Gasoline \_\_\_  
Pawn shop/used merchandise \_\_\_  
Health care (e.g., doctor, dentist, physical therapy, chiropractic, mental health) \_\_\_  
Farmer's market (during seasonal operation) \_\_\_



10. The following is a list of stores/services that some people have identified as businesses they might like to see in downtown Albion. Please tell us how likely you would be to use these stores on a regular basis if they were to open in the downtown area.

	<b>Extremely Unlikely</b>	<b>Somewhat Unlikely</b>	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	<b>Extremely Likely</b>
Bagel shop / bakery	7 (6.5%)	9 (8.3%)	39 (36.1%)	53 (49.1%)
Coffee shop with comfortable social area	12 (11.1%)	16 (14.8%)	40 (37.0%)	38 (35.2%)
Health food store/restaurant	12 (11.1%)	21 (19.4%)	48 (44.4%)	26 (24.1%)
Sports bar	32 (29.6%)	24 (22.2%)	30 (27.8%)	20 (18.5%)
Vegetarian Restaurant	38 (35.2%)	21 (19.4%)	30 (27.8%)	16 (14.8%)
Restaurant with arcade games e.g., Dave & Busters	53 (49.1%)	25 (23.1%)	19 (17.6%)	9 (8.3%)
Ethnic restaurant	8 (7.4%)	12 (11.1%)	45 (41.7%)	39 (36.1%)
Clothing store	22 (20.4%)	38 (35.2%)	29 (26.9%)	16 (14.8%)
Video rental	40 (37.0%)	23 (21.3%)	34 (31.5%)	6 (5.6%)
Art gallery	34 (31.5%)	31 (28.7%)	24 (22.2%)	16 (14.8%)
Jewelry	45 (41.7%)	33 (30.6%)	20 (18.5%)	7 (6.7%)
Gift shop	28 (25.9%)	27 (25.0%)	31 (28.7%)	14 (13.0%)
CD/DVD for purchase	37 (34.3%)	32 (29.6%)	20 (18.5%)	13 (12.0%)
Other – please specify				
Other – please specify				

**These last questions ask about more general issues related to downtown Albion:**

11. What community events do you typically attend? (check all that apply)
- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| Festival of the Forks                  | 79 (73.8%) |
| Albion Aglow                           | 23 (21.3%) |
| Summer concerts at the bandshell       | 48 (44.4%) |
| Albion's A-maizing Corn Fest           | 29 (26.9%) |
| Albion Cardboard Sled Classic          | 24 (22.2%) |
| Albion Reunion Cruise-In on the Bricks | 19 (17.6%) |
12. What percentage of your visits to downtown Albion are made by:
- |                       |                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Automobile/motorcycle | Mean=74.26; Stddev=30.58; Median=90 % |
| Bicycle               | Mean=3.38; Stddev=10.94; Median=0 %   |
| Foot                  | Mean=22.07; Stddev=27.98; Median=10 % |
13. Four pedestrian corridors have been proposed to increase foot-traffic between the campus/surrounding neighborhoods and the downtown Albion district. The development of a corridor could involve improved sidewalks, better lighting, and other upgrades. Which one of the following would you be most likely to use on regular basis to walk downtown? (check one box)
- |                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Michigan Avenue                | 16 (14.8%) |
| Cass Street                    | 25 (23.1%) |
| Porter Street                  | 13 (12.0%) |
| Erie Street                    | 27 (25.0%) |
| I am unlikely to walk downtown | 11 (10.2%) |
14. How safe do you feel when you visit the downtown Albion area during the day? (check one box)
- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Extremely safe   | 83 (76.9%) |
| Somewhat safe    | 23 (21.3%) |
| Somewhat unsafe  | 1 (0.9%)   |
| Extremely unsafe | 0 (0.0%)   |
15. How safe do you feel when you visit the downtown Albion area at night? (check one box)
- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Extremely safe   | 27 (25.0%) |
| Somewhat safe    | 44 (40.7%) |
| Somewhat unsafe  | 24 (22.2%) |
| Extremely unsafe | 4 (3.7%)   |
16. How likely would you be to attend or teach an Albion College class in downtown Albion if this option was available? (check one box)
- |                    |            |
|--------------------|------------|
| Extremely unlikely | 19 (17.6%) |
| Somewhat unlikely  | 21 (19.4%) |
| Somewhat likely    | 29 (26.9%) |
| Extremely likely   | 24 (22.2%) |

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We greatly appreciate your help with this process. If you have any additional comments you would like to make, please use the back side of this page.

**Please return your completed survey to the Ford Institute Office in 201 Robinson Hall or the Ford Institute mailbox in the Kellogg Center.**

**DOWNTOWN ALBION UTILIZATION SURVEY (Student Responses)**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. As the College and the Albion Community continue to work together to improve the region’s quality of life, your input is very important. This survey will take approximately ten minutes to complete. Please read all of the questions carefully and provide honest answers. All responses are confidential – we do not ask for your name, and no information will be presented on an individual basis. Results will only be reported in aggregate (e.g., percentages, mean responses, ranges).

If you have any questions about this survey and/or your participation, please contact Dr. Al Pheley at 629-0359 or Dr. Mike Frandsen at 629-0315.

**Please return your completed survey to the Ford Institute Office in 201 Robinson Hall or the Ford Institute mailbox in the Kellogg Center.**

The focus of this survey is on the downtown area of Albion, encompassing Superior St. from W. Mulberry to W.Elm St., on the west to Eaton St., and on the east by Ionia St. It does not include the Eaton St. commercial area (McDonalds, Felpausch, etc.).

**First, please tell us a little about yourself (please remember, all information is confidential):**

- 1. Are you a (check only one)..... Student 328  
Faculty member   
Staff   
Administrator
  
- 2. What is your gender? (check only one) ..... Male 120 (36.6%)  
Female 207 (63.1%)
  
- 3. How old were you on you last birthday? ..... \_\_ \_\_ years  
..... 17 years 5 (1.5%)  
..... 18 years 89 (27.1%)  
..... 19 years 85 (25.9%)  
..... 20 years 77 (23.5%)  
..... 21 years 56 (17.1%)

- .....22 years+ 12 (3.6%)
4. Is your permanent address in the 49224 zip code? ..... Yes 9 (2.7%) No 319 (97.3%)
5. If you answered yes to question #4, how long have you lived in the 49224 zip code? ..... Range; 1-28 years
6. If you are a student, what year are you? (check only one) .....
- |                 |     |     |         |
|-----------------|-----|-----|---------|
| ..... Freshman  | '11 | 107 | (32.6%) |
| ..... Sophomore | '10 | 83  | (25.3%) |
| ..... Junior    | '09 | 84  | (25.6%) |
| ..... Senior    | '08 | 53  | (16.2%) |

**Next, please tell us about your use of the Albion downtown area:**

7. How many days in a typical month do you spend money at and/or utilize the following types of downtown Albion businesses?
- Restaurants and/or bars \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Services (e.g., hairstyling, banking, tattoos, insurance, legal) \_\_\_ \_\_\_
- Merchandise (e.g., hardware, apparel, books, appliances, florists) \_\_\_ \_\_\_
- Entertainment (pre-Bohm closing) \_\_\_ \_\_\_
- Gasoline \_\_\_ \_\_\_
- Pawn shop/used merchandise \_\_\_ \_\_\_
- Health care (e.g., doctor, dentist, physical therapy, chiropractic, mental health) \_\_\_ \_\_\_
- Farmer's market (during seasonal operation) \_\_\_ \_\_\_
8. Please estimate how much money you spend at downtown merchants during a typical month. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- |  |
|--|
| Mean=\$46.55; Stddev=51.85; Median=\$30.00 |
| \$0 19 (5.8%)                              |
| \$1-\$25 128 (39.1%)                       |
| \$26 - \$50 104 (31.6%)                    |
| \$51 - \$75 18 (5.4%)                      |
| \$76 - \$100 31 (9.4%)                     |
| \$101+ 23 (6.9%)                           |

9. How many days in a typical month do you spend money at and/or utilize the following types of business in Jackson and/or Battle Creek?
- Restaurants and/or bars \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Services (e.g., hairstyling, banking, tattoos, insurance, legal) \_\_\_ \_\_\_
- Merchandise (e.g., hardware, apparel, books, appliances, florists) \_\_\_ \_\_\_
- Entertainment (pre-Bohm closing) \_\_\_ \_\_\_

Gasoline \_\_ \_\_

Pawn shop/used merchandise \_\_ \_\_

Health care (e.g., doctor, dentist, physical therapy, chiropractic, mental health) \_\_ \_\_

Farmer's market (during seasonal operation) \_\_ \_\_

10. The following is a list of stores/services that some people have identified as businesses they might like to see in downtown Albion. Please tell us how likely you would be to use these stores on a regular basis if they were to open in the downtown area.

	<b>Extremely Unlikely</b>	<b>Somewhat Unlikely</b>	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	<b>Extremely Likely</b>
Bagel shop / bakery	17 (5.2%)	44 (13.4%)	170 (51.8%)	93 (28.4%)
Coffee shop with comfortable social area	33 (10.1%)	53 (16.2%)	106 (32.3%)	132 (40.2%)
Health food store/restaurant	36 (11.0%)	81 (24.7%)	126 (38.4%)	81 (24.7%)
Sports bar	76 (23.2%)	68 (20.7%)	96 (29.3%)	84 (25.6%)
Vegetarian Restaurant	148 (45.1%)	93 (28.4%)	54 (16.5%)	30 (9.1%)
Restaurant with arcade games e.g., Dave & Busters	57 (17.4%)	93 (28.4%)	107 (32.6%)	66 (20.1%)
Ethnic restaurant	43 (13.1%)	82 (25.0%)	117 (35.7%)	83 (25.3%)
Clothing store	47 (14.3%)	60 (18.3%)	134 (40.9%)	82 (25.0%)
Video rental	52 (15.9%)	68 (20.7%)	121 (36.9%)	80 (24.4%)
Art gallery	123 (37.5%)	113 (34.5%)	59 (18.0%)	27 (8.2%)
Jewelry	133 (40.5%)	102 (31.1%)	72 (22.0%)	18 (5.5%)
Gift shop	96 (29.3%)	96 (29.3%)	109 (33.2%)	21 (6.4%)

CD/DVD for purchase	44 (13.4%)	73 (22.3%)	145 (44.2%)	56 (17.1%)
Other – please specify				
Other – please specify				

**These last questions ask about more general issues related to downtown Albion:**

11. What community events do you typically attend? (check all that apply)

- Festival of the Forks 213 (64.9%)
- Albion Aglow 30 (9.1%)
- Summer concerts at the bandshell 22 (6.7%)
- Albion’s A-maizing Corn Fest 8 (2.4%)
- Albion Cardboard Sled Classic 17 (5.2%)
- Albion Reunion Cruise-In on the Bricks 7 (2.1%)

12. What percentage of your visits to downtown Albion are made by:

Automobile/motorcycle Mean=52.02; Stddev=38.62; Median=50 %

Bicycle Mean=2.41; Stddev=10.89; Median=0 %

Foot Mean=45.83; Stddev=39.05; Median=50 %

13. Four pedestrian corridors have been proposed to increase foot-traffic between the campus/surrounding neighborhoods and the downtown Albion district. The development of a corridor could involve improved sidewalks, better lighting, and other upgrades. Which one of the following would you be most likely to use on regular basis to walk downtown? (check one box)

Michigan Avenue 149 (45.4%)

Cass Street 62 (18.9%)

Porter Street 14 (4.3%)

Erie Street 30 (9.1%)

I am unlikely to walk downtown 30 (9.1%)

14. How safe do you feel when you visit the downtown Albion area during the day?

(check one box)

Extremely safe 120 (36.6%)

Somewhat safe 177 (54.0%)

Somewhat unsafe 23 (7.0%)

Extremely unsafe 4 (1.2%)

15. How safe do you feel when you visit the downtown Albion area at night? (check one box)

Extremely safe 26 (7.9%)

Somewhat safe 78 (23.8%)

Somewhat unsafe 147 (44.8%)

Extremely unsafe 72 (22.0%)

16. How likely would you be to attend or teach an Albion College class in downtown Albion if this option was available? (check one box)

Extremely unlikely	61 (18.6%)
Somewhat unlikely	92 (28.0%)
Somewhat likely	134 (40.9%)
Extremely likely	33 (10.1%)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We greatly appreciate your help with this process. If you have any additional comments you would like to make, please use the back side of this page.

**Please return your completed survey to the Ford Institute Office in 201 Robinson Hall or the Ford Institute mailbox in the Kellogg Center.**

## **Appendix B**

*A Report on College-Community Relationships in Smaller Communities  
Presented to the Albion College Board of Trustees' Community Relations Committee  
27 October 2005*

### **I. Introduction**

At the suggestion of Albion College Trustee Jess Womack, in August 2005 we contacted a number of colleague institutions and sought information about the nature of their relationships and partnerships with the communities in which they were located. Our goal was to gather data about what works – and what doesn't – in terms of civic engagement, economic development, and institutional synergy in “town-gown” relationships. Our hope was to learn about best practices and be able to apply them to our own institutional relationship with the community of Albion, as well as to share these findings with other interested colleges.

Given that Albion College has a current enrollment of 1950 students and is located in a community of 9144 persons (2000 US Census) in a primarily rural area of south-central Michigan, we decided to limit our research to other top-tier institutions with enrollments of 3,000 or less that were located in communities with populations of 25,000 or less. We sent surveys to 73 institutions (see Appendix A) and received responses from 17. These 17 institutions provide a diversity of viewpoints, with colleges from New England, the South, the Mid-Atlantic states, and the Midwest included in this group, along with some that have explicitly religious ties and others that are independent and secular in nature.

Each institution received a letter from President Peter Mitchell (see Appendix B) that explained why we were seeking their ideas and input and asking them to respond to these five questions:

#### Survey Questions

- 1. In what ways does your institution collaborate or work in partnership with representatives (e.g., local elected officials, municipal employees, leaders of community organizations) of the community in which you are located?*
- 2. Does your institution have any written agreement, plan, or partnership document that defines the relationship and areas of shared activity between it and your local community? If so, what is the nature of this agreement?*
- 3. Which aspects of your institution's relationship with your local community are the most positive or beneficial, and which are the most challenging or difficult?*
- 4. What types of community development or economic development activities, if any, do you undertake jointly with representatives of your local community?*



5. *Overall, how would you describe the status of the relationship that exists between your institution and the local community?*

A few of the responding institutions provided responses to the survey questions that were rather brief and perfunctory, but most provided thoughtful commentary and, in several cases, included a variety of supporting documents. (Copies of the written responses may be found in Appendix C.)

## **II. Key Findings and Common Threads**

1. *In what ways does your institution collaborate or work in partnership with representatives (e.g., local elected officials, municipal employees, leaders of community organizations) of the community in which you are located?*

The response from Williams College in Massachusetts to our first survey question delineated six general categories to describe the variety of ways in which they interact with their host community: education, culture, economic development, civic involvement, facilities use, and student community service. These six categories seemed to hold true, in general, for all responding institutions, while the particulars varied widely.

The majority of respondents cited employees, including senior administrative staff, who serve in their host communities as members of city councils, chambers of commerce, economic development groups, and nonprofit organizations (i.e., civic involvement). Additionally, nearly all of the respondents share their facilities with people and groups from the community, invite community members (usually at no charge) to take part in sporting, entertainment, and cultural events on campus, and have students engaged in service.

On some campuses, responsibility for collaboration or partnership with the community is diffuse and informal, but on other campuses there are established offices which provide coordination and focus. Two examples are Grinnell's Office of Community Enhancement, which oversees donations, mini-grants, and capital gifts for community projects, and Colgate's Center for Outreach, Volunteerism, and Education, which was established with a grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation.

While virtually all respondents mentioned involvement with community educational programs and the area public schools, the nature of this involvement ranged from minimal to comprehensive. On one end of the spectrum are institutions whose faculty offer occasional lectures at the public library and which encourage volunteer tutoring in the public schools; at the other end of the spectrum are colleges like Williams that has donated \$250,000 to the local high school to help it cover a budget deficit, is paying \$1.5 to \$2.5 million to construct a new elementary school, and is using a \$729,000 grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to fund a science outreach program.

In addition to education, the other area of college-community partnership in which the form and the depth of engagement appears to vary to a notable degree is economic development. At some of our colleague institutions, the primary contribution to economic development is serving as an employer, doing business with area vendors, and generating economic activity through the expenditures of students, employees, and other affiliates of the college. The next level of involvement in economic development includes periodic joint planning sessions between college and city officials, occasional special projects (e.g. sharing the cost of repaving Main Street), and establishing projects (e.g. Grinnell's Center for Prairie Studies) with explicit college-community links. The deepest level of involvement in economic development, to be examined in more detail in the responses to Question 4, is in the creation of for-profit and nonprofit development corporations and limited partnerships that involve substantial investments of capital and which wed the economic development activities of the town with the college to a significant degree.

- 2. Does your institution have any written agreement, plan, or partnership document that defines the relationship and areas of shared activity between it and your local community? If so, what is the nature of this agreement?*

Most of the responding institutions do not have a comprehensive partnership agreement or plan. Some have Memoranda of Understanding on specific matters such as how campus safety and public safety jurisdictions address police issues. (Principia College cited a 10-year lease in conjunction with a reforestation project, along with an agreement with the State of Illinois related to an annual deer hunt on campus!) Most partnership agreements or legal relationships had to do with different forms of economic development activity.

- 3. Which aspects of your institution's relationship with your local community are the most positive or beneficial, and which are the most challenging or difficult?*

Here are sample comments from respondents of positive or beneficial aspects of town-gown relationships: good relationships with elected officials ... volunteers and service learning ... mutual respect, appreciation for the college's cultural and intellectual contributions ... newsletter to community residents, hosting of public events ... planned, joint initiatives ... our "Be a Good Neighbor" orientation for students living off campus ... most forgiving police force in the country ... relationships with the public schools ... the green space we offer, access to campus facilities ... students, staff, and alums involved in the community.

Here are sample of comments from respondents of challenging or difficult issues in their town-gown relationships: debate on how much the college should participate in community projects ... land use issues ... unrealistic expectations ... zoning issues ... college expansion into new neighborhoods ... slowness of municipal approvals ...

being asked to carry a disproportionate share of the financial load for the community ... students offending local residents ... trying to jointly plan downtown development ... misunderstanding of tax issues, perception that the college has “taken over the downtown.”

4. *What types of community development or economic development activities, if any, do you undertake jointly with representatives of your local community?*

All responding institutions but one cited active involvement in economic development. Here's an abbreviated listing of some of the responses:

- Grinnell participates in a downtown development partnership, “Grinnell Renaissance,” has invested in the renovation and restoration of the Strand Theatre with local investors, and has helped fund expansion of the Grinnell high school.
- Hillsdale has contributed \$200K + toward street repairs and provided some grants for economic development projects.
- Allegheny created the Center for Economic and Environmental Development (CEED) a college/community partnership with broad array of community stakeholders, with programs on ecotourism, art and the environment, the Meadville Community Energy Project, and other activities.
- Williams helped establish a venture fund, Berkshires Capital Investment (BCI), with \$1 million, then added \$3 million later. BCI has spurred job creation and economic development. Additional job creation has come via new companies formed by recent Williams’ graduates.
- St. Olaf has joined with Carleton College, First National Bank, and Community National Bank in a \$1.5 million limited liability corporation making investments to promote community and economic development in Northfield, MN.
- Kenyon cites its “Food for Thought” initiative to develop sustainable local markets for agricultural products, helping area farmers and preserving the character of region.
- Juniata has established a business-creation center, the Juniata Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, which includes a business incubator, a Student Seed Capital Fund (with funding of \$420K), and partnerships on economic development with the city and county.
- Denison has helped establish a continuous care retirement community by providing seed money and marketing support.
- Centre supported keeping the post office in downtown; moved the college bookstore off campus and into the town, and is helping to recruit new companies to the area.
- Colgate has established the nonprofit Partnership for Community Development that established joint goals with a coalition of community representatives. One project undertaken by this group was investing \$500,000 in the restoration of the Village Green. Colgate has also established the for-

profit limited liability company -- Hamilton Initiative, LLC -- for property development and management. This entity has purchased and restored eight downtown buildings that now contain viable businesses. Total investment to date is more than \$11 million.

5. *Overall, how would you describe the status of the relationship that exists between your institution and the local community?*

“Good ... strong ... improving ... excellent ... generally positive” – these are some of the terms used by the responding institutions to describe their overall relationships with their host communities. Some respondents also mentioned that college-community relationships need constant nurturing, that there were occasional disagreements and predictable “squeaky wheels,” but that these relationships are mutually beneficial and well worth the effort.

### **III. Implications and Recommendations for Albion**

In a recent speech, President Shapiro of Williams College offered the following insights:

“As with most adages, there’s truth in the encouragement to ‘bloom where you’re planted.’ For Williams the saying reminds us that the College’s growth depends significantly on the health of the local community in which it’s so deeply rooted. The logic is as follows. Williams exists to educate students. The greatest determinant of the quality of their education is the quality of faculty and staff. We can only recruit and retain the best if the local community is healthy. So when the College, after careful consideration, invests in the local infrastructure, especially in public education and healthcare, every dollar benefits our current and future students. That the whole community also benefits from these investments is a very happy and healthy convergence.”

Certainly, this perspective holds true in Albion. It is in the College’s self interest to do what we can to improve the “health” of the community of Albion. (It is also in the best interests of our students to be provided avenues for engagement in our community as part of a liberal arts education aimed at creating good citizens.) And the good news, in terms of what Albion College is doing to build and nurture positive relationships with the greater Albion community, is that we compare favorably in most areas with the best practices of comparably situated liberal arts institutions. We share our facilities, our students and staff are engaged in the community and the public schools, our cultural and entertainment programs are open to the public, we cooperate with city officials and have representation on various public bodies, and we have shared our expertise and financial resources.

Our challenge is that our community is not healthy. While there is new economic activity at Guardian Industries, The Anderson’s Ethanol Plant, and Patriot Antennae Systems (for

example), our local economy continues to move through a rather wrenching economic transition. Albion's downtown is underutilized and in need of repair, and our public schools are struggling with declining enrollment, staff layoffs, a growing concentration of students from poor families (at present, 65% of Albion's public school students are eligible for free or reduced priced lunches), and difficulty in meeting the requirements of the No Child Left Behind law. In terms of the College's ability to attract students, staff, and faculty, perceptions about our public schools and our local economy can serve as attractors or inhibitors.

### Possible Directions for the Community Relations Committee and the College

1. Deepen and formalize our focus on downtown development and local economic development by forming an investment company in partnership with the City of Albion, area banks, corporations, and foundations. Institutions such as Grinnell, St. Olaf, Colgate, Juniata, and Williams have taken a direct role in revitalizing their respective downtown areas by assembling the capital, the partners, and the expertise to make development happen. With the Albion Downtown Development Authority's technical study and marketing plan nearing completion, there will be current data available on what might be possible in Albion's downtown. Creating an investment entity or mechanism would enhance the College's current community initiatives utilizing Gerstacker funds to catalyze and leverage economic development.
2. Continue to explore how the new science complex resources can be linked to existing businesses in the area and to new business incubation, perhaps in conjunction with the Gerstacker Institute.
3. Utilize the Shurmur Institute, the Education Department and other academic departments to explore a deeper, more sustained role for Albion College in the community's public education system.
4. Establish an office on campus, or expand the mission of an existing office or Institute, with responsibility for coordinating all aspects of Albion College's relationship with the greater Albion community, particularly in the area of economic development.

Other???

## Appendix C

### Upjohn Survey Results

Many small towns across America are experiencing hard times. Small town economies are generally suffering due to a loss of industry and a lack of decent salary jobs. Albion, MI is a small town located in the south-central part of the state, and it is in the process of recovering from a fairly severe depression. Albion used to be a booming manufacturing town, but then a number of the manufacturing companies went out of business or left town. This had a devastating impact on the Albion economy, and the town is now in the rebuilding process. Albion College, located right in town, wants to help out the local community and is debating what it should or could do. The college partnered with the W.E. Upjohn Institute with hopes of finding out what other small town colleges are doing in terms of stimulating economic development in their respective towns or communities.

The colleges chosen for this study were found from USNews.com's list of top liberal arts colleges. The schools and their respective towns were then compared with Albion, both the school and town, in order to see whether or not they are a good match. The main criteria for the match were similar enrollment sizes, small town setting, and not a suburb of a major city. The schools that met the criteria were then contacted by email and phone. Here are the results:

#### **Alma College** (Alma, MI)

Alma College currently does not have a formal role in its town's economic development efforts. The college does, however, help assist in service learning programs. College affiliates have been known to serve food to those in need as well as help out in the local schools. Many Alma students volunteer in the after-school reading programs at the local elementary schools.

College Efforts:

- Volunteering

#### **Lyon College** (Batesville, AR)

Lyon College is located in Batesville, AR. Batesville is the oldest town in the state, and, unfortunately, it has a problem with losing industry and lack of tourism. Lyon College, however, does not have a formal role in the economic development efforts that occur in the town. The college does support and promote certain causes that its officials feel are important to the town's growth. The college promotes and endorses the idea of increasing tourism in this historic town. Currently, there is a sales tax agenda that the college is also supporting; the tax will impose a 1% sales tax upon hotels/motels and possibly restaurants. So while the college is not directly involved in stimulating economic development, it certainly plays an important role in supporting issues that are crucial for the town's development.

College and Town Efforts:

- Improve tourism
- Supporting important issues: hotel/motel tax

**Juniata College** (Huntingdon, PA)

Juniata College is actively involved in stimulating economic development in its county. The college feels that almost every town in the county is in need of some kind of help. The towns located in the county, in general, seemed to have had a productive manufacturing industry at some point in time. Some of those manufacturing companies have since gone out of business, but the ones continuing to do well today have an international focus. In order to help the county's business environment, the college has developed a business incubator, the Juniata College Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, and college officials are often hired as economic development staff.

The JCEL was established in 2003 and has made quite an impact. JCEL has partnered with other organizations to help promote economic development within the county. New businesses often take advantage of the Sill Incubator, and once they are ready to move on, they relocate to another place in the county. Businesses remain local, and this is a vital component for a county's success. College students also receive opportunities to intern at these local businesses and gain some valued experience. Juniata is one of the few campuses nationwide that actually offers entrepreneurial studies as a part of its curriculum.

<http://www.juniata.edu/services/jcel/about/index.html>

College and Town Efforts:

- JCEL and Sill Incubator
- Entrepreneurial program for students
- College officials hired as economic development staff

**DePauw College** (Greencastle, IN)

DePauw College seems to be in the same phase as Albion: research. Greencastle models Albion almost perfectly, except it lacks diversity. DePauw is focusing its efforts towards the downtown. The downtown was described as deteriorating and being ridden with empty store fronts that are not well kept. It was also made known that there exists a pretty severe town-gown relationship. A cultural divide is causing a significant amount of tension between people of the town and people associated with the college. The college students, for example, are all considered to be wealthy, and most local people generally can not relate with having excess money. Also, many local high school students do not end up attending DePauw because of its high academic standards.

DePauw and Greencastle, however, are taking the proper steps in order to improve the state of the town. Greencastle created the Hometown Alliance, which composed a comprehensive marketing study. Likewise, DePauw hired an outside source to do an economic impact study, which showed the college's effect on the town. DePauw wants to support and improve the local business market, and has had an idea to work with the downtown restaurants. The restaurants want to tap into the wealth of the college

students, but the college knows that many of its students do not carry cash on them. As a solution, DePauw is considering developing a partnership with the restaurants. The students would be able to swipe their college IDs when ordering food and money would be deducted from their account. The college is also going to host the Greencastle Summit, where community leaders will come together and talk about different strategies for stimulating economic development.

College and Town Efforts:

- Marketing study and economic impact study
- Swipe cards for downtown restaurants

### **Berea College** (Berea, KY)

Berea College is actively participating in its region's economic development efforts. The town of Berea has a rather healthy economy, so the college disperses its efforts throughout the Southern Appalachian Region. Berea College has developed several institutes, all with the purpose of serving the region in various ways. One institute, in particular, is the Brushy Fork Institute. It has been serving the region since 1988 and focuses on helping local communities become self-sufficient. The Institute works with the communities and teaches them to come up with their own economic development ideas. Specifically, the Brushy Fork Annual Institute is a 3-day program that provides training to community leaders. The college has also set up the Entrepreneurship for the Public Good (EPG), which trains Berea students in the fields of entrepreneurship, business, non-profit, etc. Here the students learn the necessary skills to start their own businesses, and ultimately the college hopes that they will use these skills to create a better future for the Appalachian communities. Community leaders believe the most productive way to revitalize the Appalachian economy is by creating more jobs and more wealth in the area.

<http://www.berea.edu/brushyforkinstitute/>  
[www.berea.edu/epg/](http://www.berea.edu/epg/)

College and Town Efforts:

- Brushy Fork Institute
- Annual Institute-training community leaders
- EPG-students learn about entrepreneurship
- Serves Appalachian region

### **Wabash College** (Crawfordsville, IN)

Wabash College appears to be in the same stage as Albion. There exists a program called Build a Better Downtown, which is comprised of several subcommittees that focus on different issues. The program incorporates college affiliates as well as town officials. There is, however, one subcommittee that is focused on attracting more college students to the downtown and trying to promote economic development partnerships with other organizations. Historically speaking, Wabash has not been a big partner with the town, but the college wants to work on this relationship. The college created the Wabash Strategic Planning committee, which supplies intellectual capital to the town. Wabash is not committed at this point to provide any of its own money for the town's economic



development efforts, but it is willing to ask its alumni to see if they are willing to help fund these efforts. Crawfordsville is also part of the national/statewide Main Street organization, which is also focused on stimulating economic development in downtowns. Some ideas that these organizations came up with for the downtown include a bookstore, restaurants/bars, housing development, and other goods and services that appeal to college students. One of the main efforts proves to be increasing the amount of student foot-traffic that goes through the downtown. The town wants to tap into the wealth that the college students bring to the area.

The Crawfordsville economy is holding steady. A new industrial park was just created, and the town is home to Donnelly and Sons (Printing and Publishing). In additions, there are a couple museums located in the town as well as several new restaurants that all appear to be doing well. The downtown situation, however, seems to be different. It was described as taking one step forward and then one step back, meaning that some businesses come and some go. The people believe that there is room for improvement.

College and Town Efforts:

- Build a Better Downtown Program and member of Main Street
- Wabash Strategic Planning Committee
- Ideas include bookstore, restaurants, and housing
- Increase student foot-traffic downtown

**Cornell College** (Mount Vernon, IA)

Cornell College has been involved with its community for a number of years. College officials are always reserved spots on various community boards and organizations. Mount Vernon has developed a very close relationship with the nearby town of Lisbon. The two towns have come up with a joint identity and have developed a consolidated strategic planning committee. The two towns are trying to improve their marketing and tourism, getting their names out there. The towns realize they are not at the level of attracting people from Chicago and other distant places, but they hope to attract people from other Iowa cities. Mount Vernon currently receives the majority of the revenues brought in from the hotel/motel tax, and it uses this money towards such efforts as promoting tourism.

Mount Vernon is also part of the Main Street Program. Main Street and another economic development center are working on a development plan for the town. The local economy is described as rather slow and there are several open store fronts. The main focus seems to be filling these store fronts with the proper businesses. The town does not want to bring in more services; instead, it wants to attract retail shops and restaurants.

Mount Vernon also has several community leader breakfasts throughout the course of a year. These breakfasts are just like they sound: they bring together various community leaders and keep them filled in on what is going on. The breakfasts have also proven to be very beneficial, and people often learn new ideas and concepts.

#### College and Town Efforts:

- Joint identity, partnership with nearby town, member of Main Street
- Promote tourism and receives revenues from hotel/motel tax
- Community leader breakfasts

#### **Similarities**

- All want to help community/county in some way.
- Developed a committee or an actual center for handling economic development efforts.
- Interested in attracting new restaurants or retail shops.
- Focused on business development and improving the current business environment in the community.
- Several colleges did not invest their own money into economic development efforts.

#### **Difficulties**

- Getting started.
- Slow process without proper funding.
- Deciding what to embark on, not all ideas will be selected

#### **Unique Concepts**

- Berea's and Juniata's student entrepreneurship programs.
- Cornell College's joint identity concept between local towns, consolidating as much as possible.
- DePauw's swipe card idea for downtown restaurants.
- Using revenues from hotel/motel tax to finance projects.
- Juniata's business incubator.
- Improving tourism.
- Berea's training program for community leaders.
- Cornell College's community leader breakfast.

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## **Appendix D**

### **Description of the Upjohn Institute's REMI model for Calhoun County**

The W.E. Upjohn Institute maintains an economic computer model especially designed to estimate the economic impact of changes in Calhoun County. The model was constructed by Regional Economic Models Incorporated (REMI) and contains three separate components that together capture the resulting total impact on the local economy because of a change in employment and in the relative cost of doing business. These components are:

- An input-output model that estimates the impact on the local economy of changes in inter-industry purchases. This component of the model captures the impact of an increase in orders to local suppliers of goods and services as well as the impact of households increasing their purchases of consumer goods and services.
- A relative cost component that estimates the impact of the expected changes in the area's cost structure due to changes in the cost of doing business. For instance, when a major employer moves into the area, it can cause wages to increase across most all industries due to the increased demand for workers and other local resources. This boost in wages, while generating additional consumption expenditures, increases the cost of doing business in the area, making the area slightly less attractive to other industries.
- A forecasting and demographic component that forecasts the resulting changes in future employment and population levels due to a change in economic activity.

The model generates two separate "realities" one with the Albion College in full operation and the other being without. It is the difference between the two that estimates the economic impact of the college on the county. The presented employment estimates for the City of Albion are based on the college's recent survey of the purchasing habits of its employees and students.

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