

Netter Center Timeline: Milestones 1981 to 2024

- 1981
 - Penn Program for Public Service Summer Internship begins, involving a select group of undergraduates in local internships, a research seminar taught by historians Ira Harkavy and Lee Benson, and a common residential experience.
- 1983
 - Office of Community-Oriented Policy Studies (OCOPS) created by Penn School of Arts and Sciences and Harkavy is named director.
- 1984
 - Undergraduate in Public Service Summer Internship focuses her research paper on West Philadelphia schools and interest of other interns in her topic lead Benson and Harkavy to focus their seminars on West Philadelphia, particularly its public schools.
- 1985
 - Harkavy, Benson, and Penn President Sheldon Hackney teach first Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) course.
 - The West Philadelphia Improvement Corps (WEPIC) begins as a youth corps model for university-assisted community revitalization in West Philadelphia, based on the proposal of four students in the course co-taught by Benson, Harkavy, and Hackney. Work begins at Bryant Elementary School.
- 1986
 - WEPIC programs expand to West Philadelphia High and Lea Elementary School.
- 1987
 - U.S. Department of Labor supports WEPIC program involving high school students in housing construction as a national Youth Employment and Demonstration Project.
 - WEPIC programs expand to Turner Middle School, which serves as flagship for many years under leadership of teacher partner Marie Bogle.
 - Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND) is co-founded by Benson and Harkavy at Penn with partners at two other local universities, Temple and La Salle.
- 1988
 - Penn Program for Public Service (PPPS) is formed by the School of Arts and Sciences, replacing OCOPS.
 - The German Marshall Fund of the U.S. supports PPPS, staff and teachers working with WEPIC, and local policymakers to travel to Sweden, West Germany, France, and Great Britain to discuss innovations in school-based training and community revitalization programs. Five cases, including WEPIC, are featured in report called *School Works: Reinventing Public Schools to Create the Workforce of the Future* (Brookings Institution, 1989).
- 1989
 - WEPIC school-based programs expand, and Turner and West Philadelphia High School named “University-Assisted Community Schools” (UACS).

- *Universities and Community Schools* journal helps to establish a network of academics and practitioners working to increase the contributions universities make to the development and effectiveness of community schools.
- 1990
 - During the kickoff of Penn's 250th Anniversary celebration, Penn President Sheldon Hackney proposes a university-wide center for community partnerships.
 - WEPIC serves as model for Learn and Serve America's higher education component, a program under the National and Community Service Act of 1990.
- 1991
 - Professor Francis Johnston's converts his Anthropology course to ABCS; he and his students lay the foundation for school-based health and nutrition programming called the Turner Nutritional Awareness Program.
- 1992
 - The Center for Community Partnerships (now known as the Netter Center) is established as a university-wide center and Harkavy is appointed as founding director.
 - Community Advisory Board of the Center is formed, followed by a Faculty Advisory Board.
- 1993
 - With a planning grant from DeWitt Wallace – Reader's Digest Fund, the Center develops a strategy for WEPIC Replication, to support other colleges and universities in adapting its University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS) model.
- 1994
 - Judith Rodin becomes Penn President and increases the University's focus on improving West Philadelphia and highlights ABCS as a core component of undergraduate education.
 - First implementation grant awarded for WEPIC Replication, which funds three replication sites for initial three years.
- 1995
 - Turner Nutritional Awareness Program evolves to become the Urban Nutrition Initiative (later the Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative, AUNI).
 - Harkavy is contributor to essay *The University and the Urban Challenge* by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros, indicating the necessity for colleges and universities to contribute to cities as "great anchoring institutions" with "formidable intellectual and economic resources."
- 1996
 - Twenty ABCS courses are taught, engaging approximately 500 Penn students in the community.
 - The Office of University Partnerships through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds the Center as a Community Outreach Partnership Center.
 - Center for Community Partnerships establishes associate director position to lead Penn Volunteers in Public Service (Penn VIPS), providing a vehicle for staff, faculty, alumni, and West Philadelphia residents to work together on community service activities and events.
- 1997
 - Harkavy co-founds the Coalition for Community Schools and is named chair (position held until 2012).
- 1998

- Center develops the Nonprofit Institute, offering free workshops for members of local nonprofits and faith-based communities to help them and their organizations improve services for their constituencies.
- Grants from Wallace Foundation and Corporation for National Community Service's Learn and Service America program expand WEPIC replication, with 23 university-assisted community school programs funded across the country through 2004.
- 1999
 - Center helps create the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy (IC) to work in collaboration with the Council of Europe and Harkavy becomes chair.
 - Undergraduate proposal in Benson's and Harkavy's seminar leads to creation of the Foundation Community Arts Initiative, now known as The Rotunda, which hosts performances and community events on 40th Street.
 - Access Science (now Moelis Access Science) launches with initial funding from the National Science Foundation.
- 2000
 - Center receives the Best Practices/Outstanding Achievement Award from HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research.
 - National Advisory Board is formed.
 - Program to Bridge the Digital Divide developed by Penn Engineering student to recycle and refurbish old university computers as well as provide computer skills training to the community.
- 2001
 - Student Advisory Board is formed.
- 2002
 - Thirty-eight ABCS courses engage approximately 900 Penn students in the community.
- 2003
 - The National Academies awards the W. T. Grant Foundation Youth Development Prize to the UACS program for the outstanding high-quality, evidence-based collaborative that generates significant advances in knowledge while increasing opportunities for young people.
 - The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation cites Urban Nutrition Initiative as one of four promising models for improving health and nutrition among children in the U.S.
- 2004
 - In her inaugural address, President Amy Gutmann proposes the "Penn Compact," with local engagement as a central tenet, to propel the University forward in its core endeavors of teaching, research, and service.
- 2005
 - Campus Compact recognizes Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative as one of eight exemplary Campus Community Partnerships in the U.S.
- 2006
 - Penn, represented by the Center, is one of a select group of institutions, and the only private research university, invited to help pilot the Carnegie Foundation's new Community Engagement Classification.

- The International Consortium and Council of Europe host the first Global Forum in Strasbourg on "Higher Education for Democratic Culture, Citizenship, Human Rights and Sustainability."
- 2007
 - Center is renamed the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships in recognition of an extraordinarily generous commitment from Barbara Netter, PAR83, and Edward Netter, C53, PAR83.
 - Community School National Award for Excellence presented to Sayre High School and Netter Center partners by the Coalition for Community Schools.
 - Three Netter Center colleagues author *Dewey's Dream: Universities and Democracies in an Age of Education Reform*.
- 2008
 - University of Oklahoma-Tulsa is selected to develop the first regional training center on UACS.
 - Netter Center publishes *Anchor Institutions Toolkit: A Guide for Neighborhood Revitalization*.
 - Penn receives the Presidential Award in the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.
- 2009
 - The Anchors Institutions Task Force (AITF) is created following a report by a committee chaired by Harkavy to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and committee members ask Harkavy to serve as AITF chair.
 - Penn ties for number one "Best Neighbor" University by the national *Saviors of our Cities: Survey of Best College and University Civic Partnerships*.
- 2010
 - Netter Center plays catalytic role in University City District's development of the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, which connects local residents to jobs at anchor institutions in University City.
- 2011
 - Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis is selected to develop the second regional training center on UACS.
- 2012
 - Emerson Fellows program created, engaging recent Penn graduates in policy and practice to advance UACS.
 - Young Quakers Community Athletics program launches as partnership between the Netter Center, Penn Athletics, and local schools.
 - Penn receives second Presidential Award of the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll in the focus area of Summer Learning.
- 2013
 - "August Wilson and Beyond" ABCS course taught by Herman Beavers and Suzana Berger begins in partnership with the West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (WPCA)/ Paul Robeson House and Museum, a Netter Center partner since WPCA's founding in 1984.
- 2014
 - University of Connecticut is selected to develop the third regional training center on UACS.
- 2015

- National University-Assisted Community Schools Network is formed in collaboration with the Coalition for Community Schools to share resources and best practices to advance UACS policy and practice.
- Penn receives the 2015 Carnegie Foundation’s Community Engagement Classification – after receiving the classification originally in 2006 – based on its examples of institutionalized practices of community engagement that showed alignment among mission, culture, leadership, resources and practices.
- 2016
 - Inaugural Netter Center Faculty-Community Partnership Award presented.
- 2017
 - Seven Netter Center colleagues author *Knowledge for Social Change: Bacon, Dewey and the Revolutionary Transformation of Research Universities in the Twenty-First Century*.
 - University of California, Los Angeles is selected to develop the fourth regional training center on UACS.
- 2018
 - Penn Leads the Vote (PLTV)—a student-run, non-partisan program that increases voter engagement and voting while advancing Penn’s role of supporting the democratic and civic engagement of Penn students—is re-established in 2018 as part of the Netter Center.
- 2019
 - Inaugural cohort of the Provost's Graduate Academic Engagement Fellowship at the Netter Center (PGAEF@NC), a two-year fellowship designed to support graduate students whose work centers on ABCS and other forms of community-engaged scholarship, as well as to elevate the education and training of the next generation of academics.
 - First jointly sponsored Provost-Netter Center Faculty-Community Partnership Award presented.
- 2020
 - Binghamton University selected to develop fifth regional training center on UACS.
 - Partnership launched with Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and its Healthier Together Initiative to develop a place-based comprehensive approach to social, emotional and mental wellness in UACS.
 - Netter Center Anti-Racism Working Group created, composed of staff and members of Netter’s community and student advisory boards.
 - Report of the ad hoc ABCS Faculty Committee for the Provost of the University of Pennsylvania is produced to help advance ABCS research, teaching, and learning.
- 2021
 - Provost’s Graduate Community-Engaged Research Mentorship created to introduce and engage more graduate students and faculty in community-engaged scholarship
- 2022
 - Sixth Global Forum hosted in Dublin on “Higher Education Leadership for Democracy, Sustainability, and Social Justice” by the Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education, comprised of the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy (housed at Netter), the Council of Europe, the International Association of Universities, and the Organization of American States.
 - Report of the ad hoc Faculty Committee on community engaged scholarship for the Provost is produced, providing a definition of community engaged scholarship at and for Penn.

- 2023
 - Culmination of year-long 30th Anniversary celebration, including Alumni Symposium on Community-Engaged Scholarship.
 - Duke University, North Carolina Central University, and East Carolina University selected as the site of sixth regional training center on UACS.
 - New strategic framework, *In Principle and Practice*, emphasizes Penn's core principles of being an anchored and engaged University and highlights goals to foster service-minded leadership and deepen engagement with West Philadelphia neighbors.
 - Provost's Advisory Committee on Community Engaged Scholarship is appointed to advise the Provost's Office on how to further advance community-engaged scholarship at Penn.
- 2024
 - Eighty-two ABCS courses are taught, engaging approximately 1900 Penn students, in addition to approximately 400 work-study students and interns and over 300 regular volunteers engaged in West Philadelphia through the Netter Center.
 - Anonymous endowment establishes the faculty director position to be known as the Barbara and Edward Netter Director of the Netter Center.