



# **P**RESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

## The Power of Collaborative Relationships

**WINTER  
2009**

From the desk of Dr. Angelo Armenti, Jr.,  
president of California University of Pennsylvania



### FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Think win-win.”

That straightforward rule — No. 4 of Stephen Covey’s “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” — guides California University’s efforts to build working relationships with some of the nation’s preeminent performing arts groups, museums and research institutions.

When Cal U associates with these high-quality organizations, everybody wins.

Since the early 1990s, the University has actively fostered these world-class affiliations. Today, Cal U regularly plays host to performances by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and exhibitions

created by the Smithsonian Institution. Our campus residence halls are included in a major exhibition at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Manderino Library houses a lending collection of lesson plans and images from the National Gallery of Art.

These connections bring excitement and energy to our campus. They make it easy and affordable for Cal U students, faculty and alumni to hear a world-renowned orchestra or explore a first-rate museum exhibition. We share these opportunities with our southwestern Pennsylvania neighbors, giving thousands of people a special reason to visit the campus each year.

Our world-class partners benefit, too. Outreach is a key component of their missions, and Cal U links these top-flight organizations with the region’s schools, civic groups and residents. Last year, for example, more than 6,000 schoolchildren visited the Smithsonian Institution’s traveling exhibition “In Search of Giant Squid,” and more than 550 middle school “squid kids” heard world-renowned zoologist Dr. Clyde F.E. Roper discuss these mysterious and fascinating creatures.

California University’s Bill of Rights and Responsibilities includes the words, “We have the right to expect the best; we have the responsibility to give our best.” I believe that building world-class affiliations not only brings “the best” to the Cal U community, but also enables us to share “our best” with the University’s neighbors and friends.

I invite you to learn more about these world-class affiliations and to hear from some of those who have shaped and participated in these very special relationships. Better yet, why not visit Cal U and see for yourself? You can find details about all our campus activities at [www.cup.edu](http://www.cup.edu).

# The power of collaborative relationships

## World-class affiliations expand our horizons

As an institution of higher education, California University houses cultural resources of value not only to our campus community, but to all of southwestern Pennsylvania.

From Manderino Library to Adamson Stadium, from the Natali Student Center to our “smart” classrooms and science labs, our facilities and programs enrich the entire region.

Through the years we have worked hard to reshape and re-invigorate the Cal U campus. At the same time, we have positioned ourselves as a cultural center by building collaborative relationships with world-class museums and performing arts organizations.

These affiliations enliven our campus. Eager students, alumni and community members fill the Mainstage Theatre in Steele Hall for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra’s annual appearance.

School and civic groups arrive by the busload to tour exhibitions prepared by the Smithsonian Institution. Teachers line up to borrow classroom materials based on treasures from the National Gallery of Art.

The buzz continues in our nation’s capital, where visitors to the National Building Museum’s *Green Community* exhibition learn how Cal U has put sustainable technology to work.

These partnerships raise the University’s profile and inspire alumni to remain engaged with their alma mater. They help us to recruit quality students, who see what good things Cal U

has to offer. In addition, they strengthen our relationship with teachers, who play a critical role in directing students toward college and nurturing in them an appreciation for the highest of human accomplishments.

### Making room

Forging world-class affiliations has been a longtime endeavor at California University. The foundation was laid more than 15 years ago, when first



The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra performs annually on campus.

a Russian ballet troupe and later a Slovak orchestra added California, Pa., to their touring schedules.

Then, in 1994, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra presented a concert that has become a Cal U tradition — one enhanced by the extensive renovations to Steele Hall, where the PSO performs every fall. An annual trip to Pittsburgh’s Heinz Hall gives Cal U students, alumni and friends another opportunity to hear these world-renowned musicians.

Bringing museum-quality exhibitions to campus presented a greater challenge — but the solution continues to bear dividends.

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SITES exhibitions are displayed in Manderino Gallery.

In the mid-1990s, the only gallery space on campus was in Reed Library, a 30-year-old building ill-suited for housing expensive and irreplaceable artworks.

Phillip M. Johnston, then director of the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, agreed to an outreach program, but only if Cal U could provide an acceptable gallery. During a campus visit, he paced off space on the third floor of Manderino Library.

A document followed outlining the museum's standards, including sturdy plywood walls sheathed in drywall, so even the heaviest artworks could be hung securely; independent temperature and humidity controls, to preserve delicate materials; and a sophisticated security system, including 24-hour video feeds to the Public Safety building.

Manderino Gallery was designed by architect Douglas Philp to meet

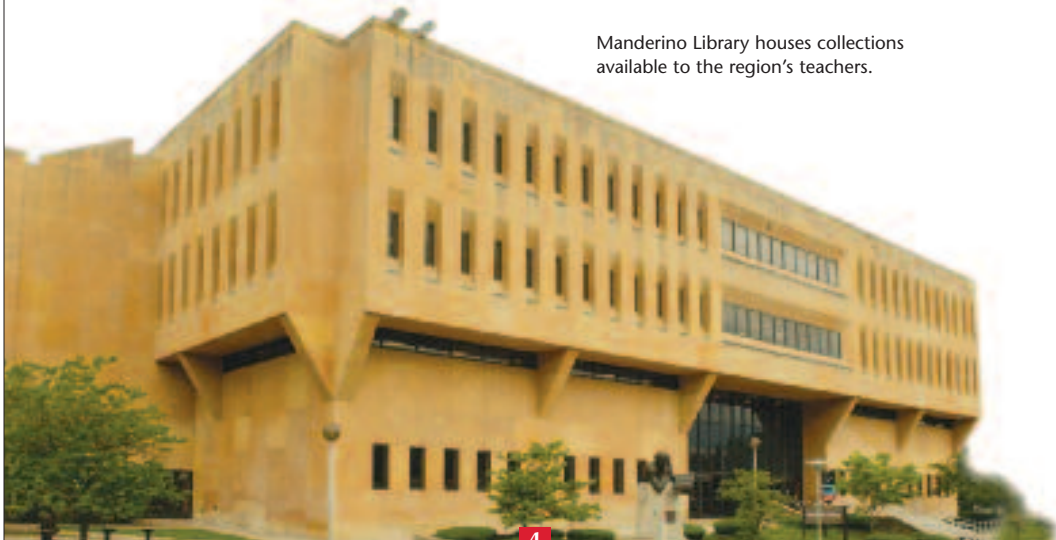
the museum's requirements.

The reward: In May 1996, when Alan Cottrill's bronze sculpture *The Ascent of Humanity* was unveiled across the street from the library, the Carnegie Museum of Art sent an exhibition of exquisite bronze pieces to complement it.

Soon the Carnegie Museum of Natural History began lending mounted animals and other artifacts to local teachers who visited Manderino Library. The specimens traveled securely in custom-built crates, accompanied by lesson plans developed by pre-service teachers from Cal U.

As a teacher-education institution, the University has a special relationship with the region's schools, so this partnership was especially satisfying. However, in subsequent years, the cost of mounting exhibitions rose and, unfortunately, the Carnegie programs were suspended.

Manderino Library houses collections available to the region's teachers.



### Building bridges

Manderino Gallery proved key to another world-class affiliation, this time with the Smithsonian Institution.

In more than a year of talks, Tim Buchanan — now Cal U's executive director of special initiatives — built a relationship with museum officials in Washington, D.C.

With credentials from the American Association of Museums, Buchanan had the professional expertise to oversee gallery installations. Cal U intended to use the gallery, he explained, to support the Smithsonian Institution's mission: promoting the diffusion of knowledge.

After completing the rigorous application process, the University celebrated its first participation in the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service program, known as SITES. Cal U remains the only university in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education to host SITES exhibitions.

The series opened in September 2007 with *Booming Out: Mohawk Ironworkers Build New York*. Since then, the University has hosted *A Magic Web: The Tropical Forest of Barro Colorado Island*; *Caves: A Fragile Wilderness*, with photos taken underground; and *In Search of Giant Squid*, seen by more than 6,000 visitors — mostly school groups — last fall.

Cal U maintains its commitment to the region's teachers by creating educational materials in conjunction with each SITES exhibition. Linked to Pennsylvania Department of Education standards, the lesson plans and activities help

teachers turn a "class trip" into a rich educational experience.

Our most recent affiliation, with the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., allows Mon Valley educators and their students to experience some of the world's most treasured artworks.

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At no charge, teachers who visit Manderino Library can arrange to borrow slide and multimedia teaching programs, videocassettes, CD-ROMs and DVDs through the National Gallery's Division of Education. Full-color

reproductions introduce students to a variety of artists, subjects, media and styles. The teaching materials meet national standards across the curriculum for grades K-12.

The program supports our goal of bringing cultural resources to



Multimedia kits from the National Gallery of Art can be used in grades K-12.

Mon Valley residents, especially students who might never have seen museum-quality artwork. At the same time, it broadens the horizons of future educators and provides a model for creative and effective teaching.

Yet another world-class connection culminated with a black-tie gala at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., where University friends applauded Cal U's role in a year-long exhibition. Buchanan again did

the legwork, alerting Museum officials to Cal U's master plan for development and, in particular, to the sustainable geothermal heating and cooling system in our new, lower-campus residence halls.

Architect and curator Susan Piedmont-Palladino examined blueprints and other project documents, and she visited California as the Museum's *Green Community* exhibition took shape.

Residence hall construction was funded through an innovative public-private partnership, she learned, and the renewable, low-impact energy system paid for itself ahead of schedule. Cal U continues to conserve natural resources and save on energy costs by relying on the earth's constant temperature to aid in heating and cooling the six new buildings.

The University's location — near the site of a coal mine once billed as the nation's most productive — makes the project even more significant.

When *Green Community* opened in October 2008, Cal U was represented. It is the only university included in the exhibition, which is expected to attract thousands of visitors.

### Working together

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Building Museum, the National Gallery of Art — every one of these organizations is a natural partner for

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California University. Outreach is vital to each group's mission; they all want to reach the largest possible audience. Cal U helps to connect these cultural entities with thousands of people each year, including schoolchildren, college students, low-income

families and rural residents who may be new to the arts.

Cal U remains committed to building and sustaining world-class affiliations. These relationships offer unparalleled opportunities for enhancing our students' education. They broaden the outlook of the entire University community, and they position the University as the cultural hub of the Mon Valley, bringing the best the world has to offer to the people of southwestern Pennsylvania.

With hard work, creativity and the support of our University friends, we hope to see these partnerships not only endure, but flourish.

### events calendar

#### SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION TRAVELING EXHIBITION SERIES (SITES) in Manderino Gallery

- *Earth From Space* — March 10 – May 1
  - *In Focus: National Geographic Greatest Portraits* — FALL 2009
  - *Beyond Baseball: The Life of Roberto Clemente* — SUMMER 2010
- www.cup.edu/sites or e-mail sites@cup.edu  
For group tours, contact Walter Czekaj, University exhibitions coordinator, at 724-938-5244 or czejac@cup.edu

#### PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

- Reception and performance — October 13
- Steele Hall Auditorium  
Tickets: Montean Dean in Alumni Relations, 724-938-4418; or the Steele Hall box office, 724-938-5943

#### THE NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM

- *Green Community* Exhibition — Through October 25
- National Building Museum, 401 F St. NW, Washington, D.C.  
Details: www.nbm.org

#### NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

- Lending program for teachers and schools – Ongoing, through the educational resource center in Manderino Library.
- For information, contact Walter Czekaj, University exhibitions coordinator, at 724-938-5244 or czejac@cup.edu

# There are goals and values we share



Professor Susan Piedmont-Palladino

Connections between universities and museums can be mutually beneficial, says architect Susan Piedmont-Palladino, a curator at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. The two share a common purpose, she says.

“The mission of both institutions is education, in the broadest sense. We're educating the public, as well as students.”

In addition to her work as a curator, Piedmont-Palladino is a professor at Virginia Tech's College of Architecture and Urban Studies in Alexandria, Va.

She visited California University as planning for the National Building Museum's *Green Community* exhibition was under way.

The Museum hoped to show how sustainable technology was making a real difference in people's lives — and the curator found Cal U's story compelling.

By using geothermal energy to heat and cool its new residence halls, the University was doing more than saving money. It was delivering a “green” lesson to its students every day, while serving as a model for other institutions.

“Right there in the middle of coal country, the University had taken this new approach,” Piedmont-Palladino says. “Instead of taking coal from the earth and destroying it to extract its energy, the earth itself was being used in a sustainable way.”

*continued*



The National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.

"I was surprised and intrigued to find that kind of entrepreneurial thinking going on. It was a wonderful story, a wonderful message."

Cal U is justifiably proud to be included in the *Green Community* exhibition, which continues at the Museum through October. All the featured projects "are being held up as an example," Piedmont-Palladino says. "Nobody ever gets tired of that."

But she hopes Cal U's relationship with institutions such as the National Building Museum will convey other lessons, as well. She believes that bright young scholars should experience museums not just as visitors but as contributors, too.

Piedmont-Palladino's own students are regular volunteers at the National Building Museum. After all, she says, these are our future experts and educators, the next generation of artists, architects and even museum officials.

A museum benefits from contact with forward-thinking institutions and energetic, enthusiastic young people, she adds. In turn, universities and their students have much to gain from interacting with museum officials and other cultural leaders.

"It's important for students to realize that people in leadership positions at these institutions are just like they are. It gives them the confidence to say, 'I can do this.'"

Both universities and museums are important regional resources with wide-ranging influence. As such, "there are goals and values we share," Piedmont-Palladino says.

"We are drawing from, and contributing to, a shared cultural pool. We are cultivating a sense of citizenship, and we have both freedoms and responsibilities because of that."

## We definitely want to do this again



Nicole Timperio, teaching her seventh-grade class.

**N**icole Timperio's students couldn't stop talking about chocolate.

Weeks after their first class trip to Cal U, the seventh-graders from Albert Gallatin South Middle School still were marveling at the process of turning cocoa beans into their favorite candy.

The sweet lesson was part of *A Magic Web: The Tropical Forest of Barro Colorado Island*, created by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and hosted by California University.

"The students were in awe of the SITES exhibition itself," says Timperio, a Cal U graduate who teaches seventh- and eighth-grade math. "They talked about it all last year." This school year, the subject was squid.

In early December, Albert Gallatin South sent its entire student body, grades 6 to 8, to see the SITES exhibition *In Search of Giant Squid* and to hear a talk by zoologist Dr. Clyde F.E. Roper. Life skills students and three classes of "incoming" fifth-graders made the trip, too. Before they went home, the children drew pictures of creative ways to snare an elusive squid.

In all, more than 500 students, teachers and teacher aides traveled from the school in Point Marion to California.

"I feel we have formed a relationship with the University by making these trips for the past two years," Timperio said. "We definitely want to do this again."

More than a dozen school districts in Washington, Fayette and Greene counties sent classes to see *In Search of Giant Squid*. More school buses will pull up in front of Manderino Gallery March 10 to May 1, when *Earth From Space* is on display. Most students arrive well prepared.

Walter Czekaj, University exhibitions coordinator, provides teachers with curriculum guides for each SITES exhibition. He and Tim Buchanan, Cal U's executive director of special initiatives, visit schools and intermediate units, too.

They show teachers how to adapt exhibit-related lessons and activities — all linked to state Department of Education standards — to their individual disciplines and grade levels.

"It's been helpful in so many ways," Timperio says. The lessons are fresh and exciting, but they also cover material students must master to do well on state-mandated tests.

A similar program helps educators to explore the interactive teaching materials provided by the National Gallery of Art and loaned to teachers through Manderino Library.

"Cal U has changed so much, even since I graduated in 2002," Timperio says. "It's so beautiful now, and there is so much going

on. We alumni are proud to show our students the place where we got our education, so we, in turn, could teach them."

Most Albert Gallatin South students live in rural areas outside Uniontown. For many of them, exploring a museum exhibition was a brand-new experience.

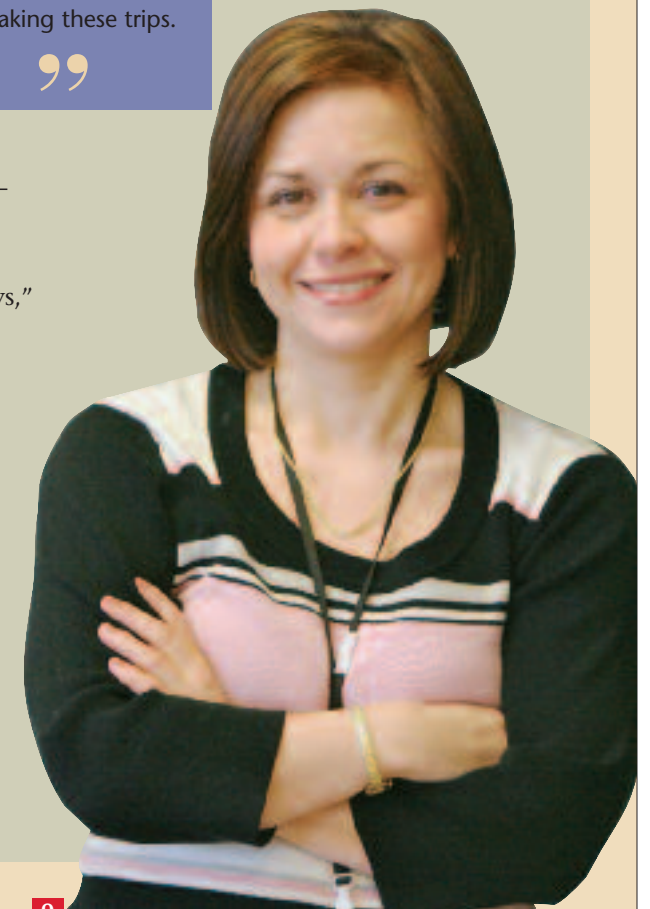
"Many of my students had never been to a college campus before," Timperio adds. "Now they say they want to go to college."

"They talk about it and write about it, and that's great. This is something we want our middle

school students to be thinking about now, so they can make it a priority in their high school years."

“I feel we have formed a relationship with the University by making these trips.”

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# I learned all kinds of facts

**T**aylor Parks calls himself “a science kid” who wants to study dinosaurs, or maybe marine biology, when he grows up.

For now, the bright-eyed 11-year-old is a student at Marion Elementary in the Belle Vernon Area School District — and after his visit to the Smithsonian Institution’s traveling exhibition at Cal U, he’s the fifth grade’s resident expert on giant squid.

“They have eyes as big as a human head,” he announces. “It’s the biggest eyeball of any creature on Earth. That’s a fact.”

Taylor is just one among thousands of students who visited the SITES exhibition *In Search of Giant Squid* this fall. He heard zoologist Dr. Clyde F. E. Roper describe the mysterious giants of the deep, then toured the display in Manderino Gallery.

“The whole room was covered in information,” Taylor says. “I learned all kinds of facts that I did not know about before. It was better than any regular

class trip. It was so amazing.”

Taylor is lucky. Although he made the visit to Cal U on his own — his grandmother, Carol Berkovitz, works in inventory at the University and his grandfather, Arthur, is a Cal alumnus who retired as interim director of the Computer Center — Taylor’s school has sponsored trips to the Carnegie Science Center and other Pittsburgh museums.

In contrast, many of the children who visit SITES exhibitions at Cal U are making their first foray into a gallery and seeing a museum-quality exhibition for the very first time.

“There are so many underserved schools in this region,” says Tim Buchanan, executive director of special initiatives for the University. “Reaching out to those districts and those students is an important part of our mission.”

When teachers arrange a class trip to a SITES exhibition, they get more than a gallery visit. Packets of information suggest lessons and activities linked both to the exhibition topic and to state

Student Taylor Parks poses with giant squid “pillows” in Manderino Gallery.



Zoologist Dr. Clyde F. E. Roper talks with students about giant squid.

Department of Education standards.

Inside Manderino Library, Walt Czekaj, a certified teacher and the University exhibitions coordinator, guides classes through a series of hands-on activities that may focus on art, writing, mathematics or critical thinking. Activities at each “station” are related to the exhibition, and each builds skills required for success in the classroom and on standardized tests.

“The students have a great time,” Czekaj says, “and the teachers get some good ideas for how to integrate the exhibition topic into their classes.”

As the final pieces of *In Search of Giant Squid* were being packed into shipping crates, young Taylor already was talking about the next SITES exhibition scheduled for Cal U.

“I definitely want to see *Earth From Space*. It’s going to be awesome,” he says.

So let’s imagine a TV commercial for the SITES program: What would it say?

Taylor thinks hard for a moment. Then his eyes light up.

“If you like squids, or any kind of science, come to Cal U,” he says. “You’ll find everything here!”

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