



ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC &
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES



CECE

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY UNIVERSITIES
AWARDS PROGRAM

CASE
STUDY
2021

IEP CATEGORY – CONNECTION

University of Cincinnati: Bringing Theories to Learning Experiences

ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI CONNECTING THEORY AND PRACTICE IN LEARNING EXPERIENCES

At UC, we believe we are more successful when we work together. We've spent the last 100 years developing deep and impactful partnerships with organizations across a broad spectrum from Fortune 500 companies to cause-based, community non-profits and beyond.

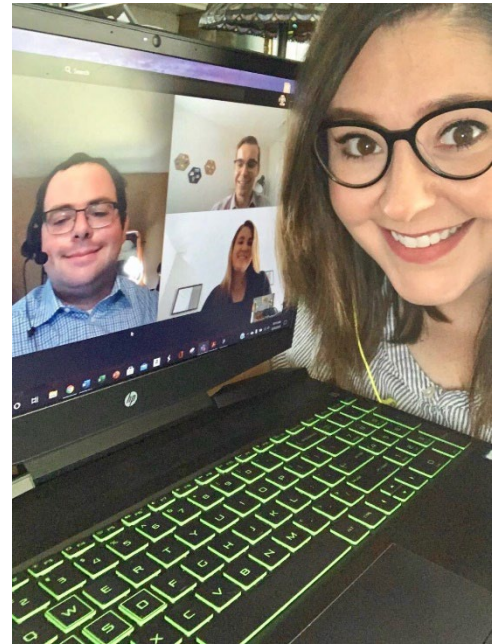
The University of Cincinnati has the oldest and one of the largest co-op programs in the world. We invented cooperative education in 1906, and each year more than 3,500 students participate in full-time co-op.

As an urban, public research university of more than 46,000 students, UC is well-positioned to maximize partnerships to achieve real results.

- UC's co-op and internship programs are #2 among public universities and #5 overall, according to [U.S. News Best Colleges Rankings](#) (2021)
- UC ranks in the top tier of America's Best National Universities by *U.S. News and World Report* (2020)
- UC is home to 14 unique colleges with a wide range of degree programs and specialty areas
- UC is one of the few universities that requires experiential learning and career education for all undergraduate students

Zero Hunger Zero Waste Campaign

UC has been a global leader in co-op for more than a century, and with the launch of the Cincinnati Innovation District we are now pushing forward new frontiers in connecting theory and practice for our students. All our efforts are in response to listening closely to our industry partner needs, which in turn optimizes outcomes for students by preparing them for the jobs that most desperately need their skills and talents. These efforts even include bringing experiential industry-need-based learning into the classroom. For example, Kroger has sponsored a "Zero Hunger | Zero Waste" campaign nationally and engaged UC students in a class dedicated to that campaign in spring of 2020. Not only did the class bring real-world problems



UC students participating in the virtual Hackathon sponsored by FIS.

and Kroger executives into the classroom, but the class was repeated and now in total has resulted in >30 new student internships at the Kroger company. “This was the most impactful and meaningful course that I have taken, involving real world problems and learning,” UC biology major Brandi Thomsen said. Thomsen said she gained or refined her skills. And thanks to the class, she said she feels more confident in her ability to form relationships and work with people from different backgrounds. At the end of the semester students presented their Zero Hunger Zero Waste proposals to the Kroger Foundation. According to Thomas, this was the most satisfying part of the course. “Standing in the 1819 Innovation Hub, before our classmates and our partners, we explained all the work we had put in for the past semester,” she said. “Hearing not only compliments but strong questions and valuable advice made us feel as though we were really adults making a positive change in the world.”

Virtual Hackathon

Another recent success in the Cincinnati Innovation District is was the first ever Virtual Hackathon presented by Fidelity National Information Services (FIS) — providing students from UC and colleges across the country a unique opportunity to create virtual apps using clever IT skills. The goal of the competition gave student teams a chance to show off their creative digital prowess and learn valuable, innovative digital skills while working with personnel from FIS — a leader in merchant, capital markets and banking digital payment solutions and one of UC’s newest industry partners.

Opportunities like this give students the chance to experience FIS — one of the world’s leading payment processing companies, says David J. Adams, UC chief innovation officer. “Students might know Venmo or PayPal — but they probably don’t know that FIS helps power them,” says Adams. “It’s all about connecting talent. It is experiences like these that provide meaningful opportunities for our students and business partners. We are continually innovating to meet the talent needs of our partners and are excited that this venue attracted students from our great university and from others as well.”

While the majority of student competitors were from the University of Cincinnati, students from tech institutes and colleges around the U.S. joined in from as far away as Worcester Polytechnic Institute and UMASS Lowell in Massachusetts to Georgia Institute of Technology to Cardinal Stritch University in Wisconsin to Miami, Kettering and Ohio State Universities and several more.

NEXT Apprenticeship

And, finally, UC is the lead institution on a \$12M U.S. Department of Labor funded apprenticeship program. The “**NEXT Apprenticeship**” program is focused on providing training/upskilling/reskilling in the areas of informatics and computing for current students and mid-career professionals and provides paid apprenticeship opportunities and state and national certifications. With a program goal of serving 6,700+ students over four years, UC alone has served 1,965 through December 2020, in just the first 18 months of the program.

LINKS TO FURTHER INFORMATION

Partnering Organizations:

- [The Kroger Foundation](#)
- [Zero Hunger Zero Waste](#)
- [Fidelity National Information Services \(FIS\)](#)
- [NEXT Apprenticeship](#)

Articles:

- [Kroger partners with UC Forward to expand Zero Hunger Zero Waste initiative](#)
- [UC students compete in CID, FIS Virtual Hackathon](#)

ABOUT APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America's oldest higher education association. APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to: expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

Based in Washington, DC, the association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration as well as the media to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students they serve.

ABOUT THE IEP UNIVERSITIES PROGRAM

APLU and its **Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE)** established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development.

The **IEP designation program** recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity.

The **IEP awards program** recognize exemplary and innovative projects in university-based economic and community engagement:

- **Talent** and workforce development
- **Innovation**, entrepreneurship, and tech-based economic development
- **Place** development through public service, outreach, and community engagement

Learn more at: www.APLU.org/IEP

