

*Today's irregular economy, technological advancements, an ever-shifting stocks demand a lot from students entering the workforce. An ideal candidate might be a techno-savvy, morally-sound problem solver with knowledge of everything from business to science to psychology.*

*Augsburg College recognizes that today's young people will enter a workplace where they'll be asked to wear many hats. So much, in fact, that they've designed their newest building around that idea.*

*For JGA's July 2009 podcast, Senior Consultant Ernie Vargo asked Augsburg President Paul Pribbenow about the college's campaign to build the physical manifestation of this idea—what they're calling the Center for Science, Business and Religion.*

**Ernie Vargo:** This is Ernie Vargo, senior consultant with JGA. I'm here today with Paul Pribbenow, president of Augsburg College. JGA has been working with Paul on this campaign for a while to build a center for science, religion and business. Paul is going to talk a little about that campaign and what makes it unique from other projects that we're working on.

**Paul Pribbenow:** Thanks Ernie. When I first came to Augsburg, the college had just come out of a campaign where they had attempted to raise money for basically just a pure science building, a building that would be labs and classrooms dedicated just to the sciences. In a campaign where they had a couple of other capital projects, they hadn't been able to get that piece funded. They'd raised \$7 or \$8 million toward a \$25 million goal.

So, one of the charges given to me by our board when I arrived was to figure out what it would take to make this our primary, signature capital project and to make it compelling enough where people would want to step forward and offer support for that building. So we engaged our entire community in really thinking through how we could build the kind of the quality science facilities we needed while at the same time make the overall project really distinctively about the kind of character and values of *this* college.

It was really a fascinating process because what we realized was that what we did in science education really never stood by itself. It was always connected to other aspects of the work of this college and other things that our students learned here. And if you talk to people on the outside—donors, prospective donors, corporations—they kept saying to us, "what we get from Augsburg in terms of students may be good scientists, yes, but they are also people who are able to think across boundaries."

We started to really take that message seriously as we then came back here internally and talked about what we could put in this building that would be symbolic of our ability to get students to think across those boundaries. Quality science facilities, yes, but also other disciplines that intersect with that science and prepare students to be leaders in the kind of world in which they will find themselves in the next decade.

**Ernie:** Paul, I know you're early on in the campaign, but what have you heard from prospective donors and how receptive are they to this concept?

**Paul:** One of the great things is the commitment we made to this campaign. Our board is firmly with us in the decision to keep working on this campaign and to continue to tell our story. So in some ways it's been a great year because we've been able to go into some settings with individuals, with foundations, with corporations, and talk about this exciting idea. It's been about the idea more than it's been about the actual building itself. The building, design, and related aspects of it are very exciting, but we've really started to focus on why this is the right thing for the college to do.

As somebody who's been involved in this work for a couple decades, I have to say that it's really exciting, especially from a college perspective, to be able to go in and talk to a donor about something that truly has an intellectual underpinning that, yes, leads to an exciting building that's going to have an impact on student experience, but is still an idea that stands for the college's most deeply held values – and the building becomes a symbol of that.

I think one of the most gratifying things for me is to hear that a science faculty member has been out in the community and is excited about this project. I know very well that if we have that excitement on the inside, then, we're going to be able, when the economy does turn, to quickly see the impact in terms of gifts coming in to help support this project.

**Ernie:** Paul, that's great. Thanks for sharing your thoughts on the Center and the good work that you're doing.

**Paul:** Thank you, Ernie. We're grateful for your good help and look forward to coming back and talking on the podcast about our success.

**Ernie:** Thank you for joining us and look forward to our next podcast in September.