The bankruptcy of the City of Detroit and the strong preference for an eclectic, environmentally sound, urban lifestyle on the part of this generation of students, as you know, have made the revival of America’s post-industrial cities, a national conversation.
There are today in excess of 70 organizations, 23 periodicals, 40 institutes and tens of thousands of experts on urban revitalization here in the U.S. Many of these institutes and experts are on your campuses. They emerge from many fields of study, including: architecture, regional planning, policy studies, transportation, social work, engineering, health, child and family studies, visual and performing arts, economics, geography and more. Urban change is a subject our institutions and our scholars from many disciplines know a great deal about. From their work it is now fairly clear what works and what does not work to revitalize cities.
Top-down strategies that uproot neighborhoods; school districts that concentrate poverty; public housing that places large families in high rises, highways constructed through cities at the expense of neighborhoods and businesses and indigenous culture—these things we know—do not work and there is plenty of empirical data to prove it.
On the other hand--increasing home ownership, encouraging and financing entrepreneurs, improving graduation rates, ... growing good jobs, providing reliable public transit, encouraging a local food culture-- These are strategies and interventions that often DO work.... and there is data to validate their efficacy.
Reading through the proposals that were submitted for this conference it is clear that scholars today are intrigued by cities that do not fit the mold.

• You want to study and potentially live in places where guerilla graffiti artists and people who make homes out of shipping crates and heat them with biomass also live.

• You seek out “sticky” cities, and neighborhoods within cities with blindly loyal residents (those PhDs running coffee shops in Portland actually think the sun shines there most of the year!)

• You are investigating places where there probably ISN’T a market for $5,000 a month studio lofts but there ARE homeowners fixing up abandoned properties; and there is street theatre going on, and new charter schools and community gardens popping up.
Today you are in a city like that. Welcome to Syracuse, NY. It is worth understanding Syracuse because:

a.) Cities of this size have something to teach us.
b.) In places like these—engaged scholarship with the support of an anchor institution can make an absolute world of difference.

As you see the NWS and the CC during the next few days, you will truly be looking at scholarship and discovery.
What I’m going to tell you is our story. It is based on engaged scholarship and how it can drive rapid urban change.

Our faculty and students, medical interns, graduate scholars, artists and engineers are powerful problem solvers when they join with community residents in this arena of urban revitalization. I have witnessed this and tried to understand why. I think this is because great scholarship and great revitalization share these essential elements. (For today’s purposes I am drawing a distinction between service learning and engaged scholarship.)

(As the Chancellor said, best universities are animated by something greater than themselves – so are the best neighborhoods.)

Now I would like to share some of the visible physical changes that have happened in Syracuse and tell you about the scholarship that took place to drive these changes...
Five years ago...
Students solving urban problems in new ways...
950+ STUDENTS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN SCHOLARSHIP ON THE CONNECTIVE CORRIDOR
What is behind change you will see, is scholarship.

This is the story behind our story. Here I told you our story – I hope over the next few days we’ll share stories from your cities and your institutions.
I know the nation has a lot to learn from the work we are all doing.