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UniverCity a welcome addition

Uniting Old Town, CSU, Poudre River stakeholders boosts vision

Advocates for three critical entities in the community are uniting in a triangle of collaboration and creativity.

Representatives for Colorado State University, the Poudre River and Old Town have come together to connect the community assets in a mission that's bound to strengthen them individually as well as collectively.

UniverCity Connections - as the effort is called - will allow participants the freedom to dream about how to make Fort Collins a better place, according to Dave Edwards, chairman of the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado. The foundation is underwriting the effort with a contribution of \$50,000.

The concept is not built around bricks and mortar or developing policy but on boosting shared use of facilities and program coordination. Major stakeholders, including the Downtown Development Authority, college students, business owners and residents, will work together to develop the shared vision.

Placing the three entities on the same page could increase efficiencies and strengthen their voice to make changes. More than 150 such voices participated in the initial meeting.

While UniverCity will address existing issues, such as the relationship between the city and university, it has taken on a broader mission of allowing participants to discuss just what they would like CSU, Old Town and the Poudre to be in the future. All three have significant impacts on the economy, environment, arts and culture and social benefits. It's a conversation well worth having.