



University Place Associates Announces Additional Advisory Roles and Responsibilities Pre-Ground Breaking

Dennis Gross, Lee Huang, Andy Luber, Tom Bell join Brianna Wronko as formal advisors and entrepreneurs-in-residence to provide strategic advice around the life sciences and the biotech industry, as well as consultation with UPA strategic partners that will take space at the best in class building at [3.0 University Place- a LEED + WELL Platinum Lab-Office Building in University City.](#)

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PHILADELPHIA, Pa. (January 16, 2019)— University Place Associates [UPA] announced four new strategic Philadelphia leaders to their advisory board. Along with **Briann Wronko** (Founder/CEO of Group K Diagnostics), who was [previously announced](#) in early 2019, the new UPA advisors and EIR's begin responsibilities immediately.

- **Dennis Gross:** Dennis M. Gross, MS, PhD is the CEO and Treasurer of the non-profit Pennsylvania Drug Discovery Institute [PDDI] based at the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center. He is also teaching faculty in the Jefferson College of Life Sciences and Adjunct Associate Professor of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics in the Sidney Kimmel Medical College. In addition, he is adjunct Professor of Basic Sciences at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine and Corporate Faculty at the Harrisburg University of Science and Technology. Dr. Gross spent 29 years at the Merck Research Labs in various roles starting at the bench in drug discovery and moving into roles in computer resources, divisional strategic planning, M&A, research administration and operations oversight at both domestic and overseas lab sites. Before moving to the PDDI, he served for 9 years as the Associate Dean for the Professional Master's Degree programs at Thomas Jefferson University. In addition to his consulting practice, he is the national co-chair for the Biotechnology Entrepreneur's Bootcamp held each year in conjunction with the International BIO convention.

- **Lee Huang:** Senior Vice President and Principal of Econsult Solutions, Inc. Lee Huang brings over 20 years of experience in economic development experience to his public, private, institutional, and not-for-profit clients. He has led consulting engagements in a wide range of fields, including higher education, economic inclusion, environmental sustainability, historic preservation, real estate, neighborhood economic development, non-profits, retail, state and local government, strategic planning, tax policy, and tourism/hospitality, and is a sought-after speaker on these and other topics.
- **Andy Luber:** President/CEO of Virion Therapeutics; PharmaD. Dr. Luber serves as President and Chief Operating Officer for Virion Therapeutics, LLC. He is a clinical pharmacist with over 20+ years of experience in drug development and clinical research. Virion is committed to developing treatments for cancer and chronic infections using targeted novel T-cell based immunotherapies that couple a checkpoint blockade with disease-specific antigenic stimulation.
- **Tom Bell:** Founder/CEO of Vertex Labs. Tom Bell is the Founder/CEO of Vertex Labs, a custom Artificial Intelligence solutions provider which specializes in Machine Learning, Deep Learning and Automation. Vertex focuses on developing innovative solutions to complex and impactful problems for clients in various industries. In addition to his role at Vertex, Tom is a board member and advisor to several start-ups in Philadelphia and New York City as well as non-profit organizations including Dream2Career and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

UPA is thrilled to add such a dynamic team of advisors and entrepreneurs-in-residence to strategically tackle executing on 3.0 University Place and beyond. The advisors, with continued influence from The Wistar Institute and Ben Franklin Technology Partners, will strategically guide UPA to look at the balance between local startup ecosystem resources, lab/office needs, and large enterprise activity in the life sciences and biotech industry.

Anthony Maher, UPA President, stated, "Data exists around the lab space supply and demand in our region, but I am a strong believer that the real insights, and the folks that have the true pulse of an ecosystem needs, are the entrepreneurs, scientists, researchers, and leaders that are directly creating disruptive innovations and research. We are really excited about the team we are creating to impact our lab/office buildings and tenant experience at 3.0 University Place and 4.0 University Place."

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- » **Dennis Gross Quote:** *"Many years ago, the noted science fiction writer Arthur Clarke noted that "The future isn't what it used to be." That is even more true today than in the 20th Century when he made the statement. The Delaware Valley is in the top 10 life science clusters in the country and is a major participant in that changing future. As biopharma, especially the large firms such as Astra-Zeneca, GSK, Janssen, Merck and Sanofi mature and transition from Pharma 2.0 to Pharma 3.0 their desire to be more outward-looking via key strategic alliances with local universities and their spin-offs becomes even more critical for the local and regional success of the life sciences in the 21 st Century. UPA, because of its geographic location, represents the nexus of the needed collaborations in the Delaware Valley Life Sciences ecosystem as it plans both tactically and strategically to build that platform for the future."*

- » **Lee Huang Quote:** "I'm excited to join such a distinguished group of local leaders in serving as a resource to the UPA team. It's an exciting time for Philadelphia, and I'm eager to see and contribute to more developments like what UPA is proposing, which will create economic opportunities for local residents and businesses, serve as a draw for human capital and financial capital from all around the globe, and solidify University City as one of the world's truly great concentrations of innovation activity and urban amenities."

- » **Andy Luber Quote:** "The biotech ecosystem in the Philadelphia region requires innovative laboratory solutions to cultivate emerging life science companies. The 3.0 University Place will incorporate many different resources under one roof so as to help these companies cost-effectively develop their innovative new technologies. I'm pleased to help UPA in their efforts to support entrepreneurs and provide realistic office/laboratory solutions."

- » **Tom Bell Quote:** "As an entrepreneur in Philadelphia, I have witnessed this city slowly growing into a hub for innovation and I believe we are entering a pivotal growth stage. This growth will be driven by the young, creative individuals of tomorrow, which is why it is imperative to captivate and cultivate the talent of this area. The ability to combine cutting edge technology, beautiful design, and environmentally sustainable real estate, creates a next generation user experience which accelerates and inspires innovation. The vision of 3.0 University Place captures this combination with the future of this city and the future of entrepreneurship in mind. I also can't wait to see and foster custom AI solutions in the Life Sciences!"

- » **Brianna Wronko Quote:** "I believe the work we're going to do with 3.0 University Place and The Platinum Corridor will exemplify 'best in class' development with meaningful early-stage ecosystem resources. In order for Philadelphia to continue to grow, and stand out, in the biotech, life sciences, and R&D industries, we need to ensure new real estate development invests back into the young entrepreneur, scientists, and researchers to impact innovation."

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About University Place Associates:

University Place Associates [UPA] is Philadelphia's leading sustainable and socially conscious commercial real estate development firm. Based and focussed in the University City area of Philadelphia, UPA is dedicated to creating the finest quality, state-of-the-art, healthiest commercial developments in a socially conscious and environmentally responsible way. UPA also seeks to engage and intersect with the surrounding residential communities, startup businesses, schools, and universities, to create local jobs, and attract organizations hungry for innovation and talent. For more information, please visit www.upaphila.com and follow [@UPAphila](https://twitter.com/UPAphila) on Twitter and [UniversityPlaceAssociates](https://www.facebook.com/UniversityPlaceAssociates) on Facebook.

About 3.0 University Place:

3.0 University Place is a 240,000+ sq ft Life Sciences enabled building (commercial lab and office trophy building), a flagship for social and environmental responsibility, built for generations that demand both from its workplace. Currently, 3.0, is in fast-track to have shovels in the ground early in 2020. This location will serve as the first expansion of an innovation corridor that was recently designated as a Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) and a Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ). Future tenants in the corridor will benefit from significant tax incentives, as well as close proximity to the 40th & Market transit hub, the University of Pennsylvania, and Drexel University.

HYPER-LOCAL ENGAGEMENT + EXECUTION



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Tom Bell



Dennis Gross



Lee Huang



Andy Lubber



Brianna Wronko