

# COGENCE Alliance

Owners + Architects + Engineers + Contractors

*Inspire. Educate. Unite.*



# Mission + Purpose

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## Cogence *(Latin)*

**“To drive together” or “Thinking that is well organized”**

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The purpose of the Alliance is to bring Owners and Developers, Architects and Engineers, Construction Managers and Contractors, and Allied Industry Professionals together to **advocate** and be a **resource** for improved project delivery.

For more information visit us at [www.cogence.org](http://www.cogence.org)

*Inspire. Educate. Unite.*

## Today's Roundtable:

*What's Happening on Campus?  
Insights on Upcoming Projects for  
Higher Education*



# General Summary

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## *What's Happening on Campus? Insights on Upcoming Projects for Higher Education*

The roundtable aimed to bring together stakeholders for collaboration and problem-solving within the construction and higher education sectors.

The core purpose was to foster understanding and shared learning among diverse participants, including owners, construction managers, trade contractors, engineers, architects, legal, and insurance professionals.

The discussions highlighted the importance of candid conversations and the exchange of ideas to improve industry practices and project outcomes.

It underscored the value of shared learning and the potential for industry improvement through collaborative efforts and transparent communication.



# Key Themes and Discussion

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## *The “Why” of Cogence:*

The session began with an explanation of Cogence and its mission from one of its founders (Pam Neckar). The organization was founded to address fragmentation within the industry and promote collaborative growth and improved project outcomes by fostering mutual respect and understanding among all project stakeholders.





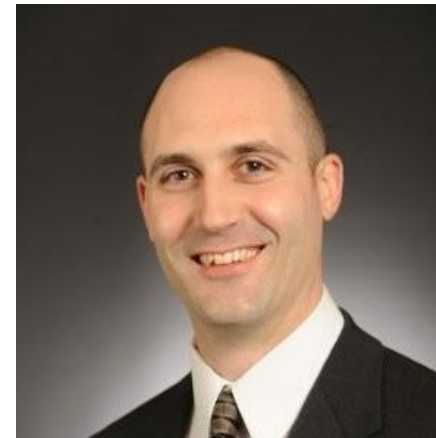
**Robert Bell, University  
Architect/Director of  
Planning, Architecture, and  
Engineering**  
**Miami University**



**David Schmidt, Assistant  
VP for Planning and  
Construction Management**  
**University of Dayton**



**Liz Birkenhauer, Director,  
Design & Construction  
Projects**  
**Northern Kentucky  
University**



**Tim Trucco, Director of  
Construction**  
**Xavier University**



# Key Themes and Discussion (AI-Generated)

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## *University Capital Projects: Panel Discussion*

**Funding and Budgeting:** Universities manage diverse funding sources, including tuition, state appropriations, and capital campaign revenues. Funding sources are different from private institutions versus public institutions. Budgeting involves prioritizing facility needs and often focuses on one large project or major renovation per cycle.

**Project Delivery Methods:** Common methods include Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR), Design-Build for smaller projects, and time-and-material contracts for very small endeavors. Early engagement of design assist contractors is favored for faster project delivery.

**Challenges:** Universities face challenges such as understanding market capacity, balancing project delivery speed with collaboration, navigating government policies, and adapting to demographic shifts and labor shortages.

**Infrastructure Integration:** A focus on integrating study and collaboration spaces into infrastructure projects to enhance the campus experience.

**Enrollment Strategies:** Adapting programs and engaging with industry leaders to attract students, including expanding STEM fields and developing new college programs.



# Breakout Session Team #1 Discussion Points

*Solving the Mobility Challenge:* What are new ideas to help cope with cars & people on campus (such as proximity of parking, pedestrian safety, maintaining access, etc.)?

- Democratize the street: consider safety needs for pedestrians and drivers, considering possible distractions for each.
- Use traffic calming measures
- Considering driver and pedestrian distractions
- Think and design for current and future multi-modal transportation
- Minimize deliveries during peak hours, ensuring ADA compliance, and
- Explore (a) multi-mobility integration and (b) remote area + shuttling solutions for workforces and students.





# Breakout Session Team #2 Discussion Points

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*Managing Design: What are better practices to avoid design being delegated to construction entities and/or getting the most out of Design Assist?*

- Delegating design away from Architect/Designer/Engineer is tricky:
  - It can work if done for right reason and delegated to right entity – it requires clear understanding on “why” up front.
  - However, it is often approached incorrectly on too many projects
- Design Assist:
  - It can bring innovation into project if done early enough and with right intentions
  - Care is needed when selecting firm: establish clear evaluation criteria, look beyond interviews (for example, “best interviewed team” may not be “best fit”).



# Breakout Session Team #3 Discussion Points

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***Tariffs & Federal Policy Changes:** Within the design & construction communities, what are current challenges and solutions (to them) that are being considered?*

## Challenges

- “Pullback” of previously committed money
- Threats of future tariffs & outcomes of current legal challenges
- Conflict between “Buy American” policy and needs for foreign-sourced items to satisfy sustainability needs
- In pricing, what is the variation due to natural “escalation” versus a tariff?

## Solutions

- Seek to accelerate design efforts and/or conduct “fast track” purchasing
- Modify/check language in contract for treatment of tariffs, force majeure, and sharing of risks
- Define how cost contingency can be used to offset cost increases due to tariffs
- Adjust timing to launch project, recognizing there may be no “perfect time”



# Breakout Session Team #4 Discussion Points

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*CMAR Best Practices: What are better practices in using Construction Management At Risk (CMAR) as a project delivery method?*

- It is essential to use it on the right projects – right blend of size and complexity. Best done for projects greater than \$15 million.
- It is important to get the right team – use the interview process to assess teams and make the best selection
- Success of CMAR is enhanced by an effective communications plan and ability to identify the critical work and risks and be able to work to Owner's priorities
- Owner and CMAR entity need to work to clear vision and objectives – make sure they are stated



# Breakout Session Team #5 Discussion Points

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***"Best Value" Selection of Project Partners:** What are some of the better practices that can be employed when an Owner uses a "best value" approach when selection of project partner (designer, CM, etc.)?*

- Stressed clear evaluation criteria and open-mindedness during selection
- It is important to have an effective interview process and having transparency in communication.
- The need for building partnership and collaboration among all project team members was repeatedly emphasized.



# Mentimeter Audience Polling Results – Plus, Part 1

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## *Plus: What did you like about today's roundtable?*

- Transparency of panelists
- Good mix of different voices
- Industry experts but from several different institutions.  
Good to have pre-set questions for them.
- Open and transparent conversations
- Breakout discussion and presentations
- Liked how the breakout questions related to panel's expertise and needs
- I like discussion of real topics in open forum
- Interactive groups
- Presenters were very good
- Getting a better understanding of the university's processes.
- Panel was fantastic!
- Wonderful Diversity Group
- Good participation from panel members and audience
- Relevant to current funding and market.
- Seeing like-minded people that give me hope
- Collaborative. Honestly, direct feedback.
- Awesome collaboration and insight
- Small size. And good interaction.
- Great panel
- Various owner types. Variety of topics



# Mentimeter Audience Polling Results – Plus, Part 2

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## *Plus: What did you like about today's roundtable?*

- Open interaction with owners in the region
- Open discussion and dialogue
- Good discussion, candid feedback
- Excellent panel
- Quality panel of guests
- Variety of industries represented by the members present
- Openness of discussion. Hearing impacts, challenges, and successes from all sides of the equation
- The diversity of different university types and owners
- The breakout sessions
- Two-way dialogue
- The breakout session and an inclusive discussion with all AEC/Owner viewpoints.
- Great turnout
- Panelists insight
- Presenters were very good
- Interactive
- Open and candid conversation
- Interactive round tables
- Honesty



# Mentimeter Audience Polling Results – Delta, Part 1

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## *Delta: What improvements should we consider for next roundtable?*

- Agree on little bit more time
- I'd like for breakout groups to have a more even representation of architects, engineers, and contractors
- Need more time!
- More architects and trade contractors
- Good attendance
- More would be even better
- Survey attendees ahead of time for topics
- More time with panel, less breakout
- Love the breakout
- More time
- Q&A is great
- Additional time for networking
- To be honest, we could have skipped the breakout
- Less topics deeper dive
- Asking for questions prior to round table
- More time for the meeting
- Earlier start time
- Slightly more time
- Easel for the charts
- Don't skip the breakout



# Mentimeter Audience Polling Results – Delta, Part 2

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*Are there any topics you would like to suggest for future roundtables?*

- Topic: delegated design
- Pick an issue and dive deeper to show how we can make change
- Next gen - recruitment, retention
- Dive into the CMAR delivery method
- Delegated design!
- Forum on delegated design





# Save-the-Dates!

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## Upcoming Southwest Ohio Chapter Roundtables & Events:

- Thursday, October 9 – Clay Shoot, Middletown Sportsmen's Club
- Thursday, November 13 – Roundtable