

A Bridge to the Future

Push a button, and Thomas Heatherwick's award-winning Rolling Bridge curls up into an elegant piece of public sculpture. It is the talk of London and also has a certain relevance for higher education and our Northeast Ohio region.

Dreamers and doers equally delight in Heatherwick's novel solution to a pedestrian problem. By fusing beauty and utility, he kindles the imagination with an inspirational display of innovation. His public bridge exemplifies how we can, and must, optimize our entire society through innovation.

The Council on Competitiveness identifies innovation as the single most important factor that will determine our nation's success in the 21st Century. In its Innovate America report, the Council seeks to optimize our national innovation ecosystem — the loosely interrelated elements that enable us to make new discoveries, capture their value in the marketplace, enhance productivity, and thereby increase our standard of living.

Toward a Stronger Circle of Collaboration Between Dreamers and the Doers.



Learn more about the Rolling Bridge
and other Heatherwick projects at
www.heatherwick.com.
Photos: Steve Speller

This is daring work, and it requires the kind of freedom and openness characteristic of great universities. Northeast Ohio is fortunate to possess research resources like The University of Akron, where the passion for innovation pervades all disciplines, all fields of study, all streams of inquiry. University innovation, of course, does not occur in a vacuum, nor can it

succeed alone. It requires a close and deep collaboration among academia, industry, government and the community.

If we can achieve the same harmony of purpose and effort as are found in the components of Heatherwick's structure, we too, will create a bridge — a bridge to the future.



Dr. Luis M. Proenza
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