



OFF THE CUF

**ENGINEERING
A TECH SECTOR**

NYU's proposed merger with Polytechnic University would give it an engineering program for the first time in decades—it could also help New York City develop a more robust high-tech sector

NEW YORK'S CIVIC AND OPINION LEADERS SEEM NOT TO HAVE PAID MUCH NOTICE to the recent news that New York University and Brooklyn-based Polytechnic University are negotiating a merger under which Poly would effectively become NYU's engineering school. If completed, however, the merger could provide a critical spark to the city's long-standing, and largely frustrated, efforts to establish itself as a vibrant center for technological innovation.

Though New York City's major universities capture and spend an enormous amount of federal research and development funding, the city has gotten a relatively small return, in business development terms, from that federal investment. Economic development experts long have believed that the absence of a large, first-rate engineering school in the five boroughs is a big reason why. While New York City boasts a dazzling array of top-flight scientific research institutions, from Columbia University and NYU to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, the city has never come close to having an equally robust engineering presence. Silicon Valley and the Route 128 Corridor in and around Boston—the two regions whose natural high-tech ecology every other community in the U.S. wishes to study and clone—both grew in tandem with large and dynamic science and engineering programs at Stanford and MIT, respectively.

No school here comes close to that on the engineering side—certainly not NYU, which hasn't had an engineering program since it sold its University Heights campus in the Bronx in 1973. According to the National Science Foundation, only three New York City universities conduct more than \$1 million a year in engineering research.

Commentary/Op-Ed - August 2007

Engineering A Tech Sector

This Off the CUF essay argues that NYU's proposed merger with Polytechnic University could provide a critical spark to the city's long-frustrated efforts to establish a more robust high-tech sector.

by David Hochman

[Click here to read the commentary \(PDF\).](#)

Update: In August 2007, the Center published a policy brief by guest commentator David Hochman which argued that the proposed merger between NYU and Brooklyn-based Polytechnic University would greatly enhance the city's engineering capabilities and provide a major lift to the city's lagging high-tech sector. In March 2008, the Polytechnic University's Board of Trustees approved the merger.

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The Brooklyn Paper, by Ariella Cohen, September 01, 2007

[The Ins and Outs of Merger Between Polytechnic, NYU](#)

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, by Dennis Holt, May 02, 2008

[NYU-Polytech Merger Could Build NYC Rep: Report](#)

Crain's New York Business, by Amanda Fung, August 26, 2007

[University Merger May Give City Innovation Lead](#)

The New York Sun, August 28, 2007

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Metro New York, by Amy Zimmer, August 28, 2007



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