

LIVING WELL

By Aaron Martin (LA'94)

Purdue University, the Purdue Research Foundation, the Purdue for Life Foundation, and Varcity have reached an agreement to establish a wellness-infused residential development in Discovery Park District at Purdue.

[Varcity](#), a McNair Living brand, builds developments directly affiliated with universities through business and social programming. The company collaborates with higher-education institutions to provide residential living to alumni and community members in state-of-the-art, amenity-rich communities located on or near campuses.

Typically, Varcity developments include:

- One-, two-, and three-bedroom homes and freestanding villas.
- Concierge service.
- Multiple chef-inspired restaurants.
- Lifelong learning opportunities.
- Interior design that celebrates the institution's history.
- Dedicated health and wellness support for Varcity residents that includes telehealth and telemedicine, physical therapy facilities, assisted-living options, and more.

Due to its official affiliation with the university, Varcity at Purdue will feature elements customized for the community:

- Location in the heart of a vibrant on-campus, mixed-use neighborhood.
- Ground floor specifically designed for interaction with students, faculty, and the larger community, including space for group meetings, art exhibitions, intergenerational engagement, and more.
- Early childhood education center.
- Expansive green spaces and professional-grade pickleball courts.
- On-site lifelong learning center through a partnership with the Purdue for Life Foundation.
- Purdue ID cards for all residents with access to university facilities.
- Opportunities to audit lecture courses free of charge.
- Collaboration with the university on research, teaching, student internships, and service opportunities.

The Varcity development will sit over ground floor amenities that are available to everyone on campus. The villas, townhomes, and apartment living options are projected to be home to residents in their mid-60s to mid-80s with wellness services available for any need at any age.

"We've been very intentional on creating a robust, well-rounded community through the Discovery Park District development, and this partnership with Varcity provides us with another cornerstone element," says Emily Najem, vice president of economic development and corporate counsel for the Purdue Research Foundation. "The district is a central connector for research, academia and corporate America—we're building an innovative community where everyone wants to live."

While exploring how this new development could best be integrated into the Purdue community, Varcity representatives met with numerous university deans and conducted focus groups with students, faculty, and alumni. The goal is to use focus-group feedback to establish a community designed for multiple generations of Boilermakers and the Greater Lafayette community.

“It’s been our pleasure to work alongside Purdue to bring this development to life,” says Ryan Haller, managing principal with Varcity. “Since our first meeting with university officials, it’s been clear Purdue is a unique institution in its business-friendly approach. While all our partners are special to us, Purdue was the first institution to buy into our entrepreneurial vision and continues to be the gold standard of public-private partnerships in higher education.”

Varcity will also engage students through experiential learning, both during construction and after residents are living in the development.

“This development will offer important opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to work with, learn from, and possibly even live alongside older adults,” says Marion Underwood, dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, Distinguished Professor of Psychological Sciences, and lead author of a proposal about understanding and enhancing vital longevity that ultimately led to the partnership with Varcity. “I’m especially excited about the experiences that our HHS students will have, including internships and clinical practicum opportunities in nursing, dietetics, athletic training, audiology, hospitality and tourism management, and other disciplines.”

Genell Ebbini, assistant professor of interior design, says, “Purdue interior design students will be true partners in the design of the facility, working alongside professionals. This is not theory—it is experiential learning at its best, where students can walk over, see the building, and work hands-on. We hope to include students from many schools and majors at different stages of development.”

This agreement represents the university’s latest effort to [grow Discovery Park District at Purdue](#), a 400-acre mixed-use development at the edge of campus that is quickly transforming the face of Purdue. Among its cutting-edge research facilities and commercial developments, district plans already include:

- [Provenance](#): A walkable, dynamic community of townhomes, apartments, and single-family homes with amenities that include a clubhouse, nature trails, and restaurants.
- [Continuum](#): A mixed-use development that features 246 luxury one- and two-bedroom apartments as well as 15,000 square feet of street-level commercial space.
- [Aspire](#): An 835-bed apartment complex designed primarily for students.
- [Convergence](#): A 145,000-square-foot, five-story, mixed-use building designed to support innovation, collaboration, and private-industry growth.
- [Ascension St. Vincent](#): A neighborhood hospital for inpatient and emergency care.
- Squirrel Park: A new green space featuring a 1938 horse barn repurposed as an event venue and potential brewery, donated by the Sonny Beck Family.
- [Source](#): A community of luxury two- and three-bedroom condominiums designed for both work and play.

“More than 75 universities have a senior living affiliation, but none are integrated with the campus community the way Varsity will be at Purdue,” says Matt Folk, president and CEO of the Purdue for Life Foundation and vice president for university advancement and alumni engagement at Purdue. “We want to provide our alumni with the perfect destination to live, work, play, and retire, and this partnership will help set the Discovery Park District apart.”