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## ESTABLISHING A CAMPUS-WIDE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROGRAM IN FIVE YEARS: A CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

*Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education are widely recognized to have made tremendous progress in the U.S. over the past 20 years (Solomon, G.T., Duffy, S., & Tarabishy, A. 2002). In fact, some researchers suggest that the U.S. is far ahead of other regions in terms of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education. This paper uses a case study to analyze the efforts of an individual hired to develop a comprehensive new entrepreneurship program at a school with little or no history of entrepreneurship education.*

*Using a case study methodology, we describe the process used to build a comprehensive new program in entrepreneurship that will soon evolve reach 150 active entrepreneurial minors and the approval of a new major in entrepreneurship. We emphasize five issues that were central to the planning process that guided the creation of the program. These issues, described in the supporting literature were: what is taught, why it is taught, how it is taught, and how well it works (see Gorman and Hanlon, 1997; Vesper and Gartner, 1997; Solomon, Winslow and Tarabishy, 1998). To this list we add "leadership support." This research provides a unique look into the process of creating a comprehensive, new program in entrepreneurship. Given the continued interest in entrepreneurship that exists, this study provides the reader with a template for creating and maintaining a comprehensive program in entrepreneurship. More importantly, given the lack of formally trained entrepreneurship educators, this study provides a detailed assessment of the foundation and creation of a program that has grown from literally nothing to a comprehensive academic program of study in five years. While the specific objectives and milestones of any academic program are unique to that institution, this study may be used as a benchmark for the efforts of others to create their own comprehensive entrepreneurship program for their university or college.*

### INTRODUCTION

In 1980, fewer than 20 universities and colleges offered courses in entrepreneurship, while today more than 1,600 universities have at least one course in entrepreneurship (Solomon, G.T., Duffy, S., & Tarabishy, A. 2002). In fact, the growth rate of entrepreneurship among colleges and

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universities in the U.S. is nothing short of phenomenal. Katz (2006) argues that the growth continues as we see entrepreneurship courses emerging in the arts, engineering, life sciences, and the liberal arts. Nonetheless, in spite of the fact that entrepreneurship is reaching a state of maturity (Katz, 2006), we continue to debate the definition of entrepreneurship (Fiet, 2001a and 2001b) and the place of entrepreneurship education within the academe (Kuratko, 2003; Katz, 2006). The continued debates suggest that entrepreneurship education is a maturing, yet highly fragmented field of study. In fact, Fiet (2001) argues that the literature on entrepreneurship education is still in a developmental stage. For this reason, we take the view that valuable lessons may be learned from the experiences of successful entrepreneurship programs.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe the efforts of one university to create and maintain a comprehensive program in entrepreneurship at a school with little or no history in entrepreneurship education (We define a *comprehensive* program in entrepreneurship as a program with more than simply an academic interest. A comprehensive program goes beyond simply adding some courses to the curriculum. A comprehensive program also emphasizes service, outreach and research objectives). As entrepreneurship education is still in the exploratory stage (Gorman and Hanlon, 1997), our choice of a research design was influenced by the limited theoretical knowledge researchers have of entrepreneurial education (Fiet, 2001a and 2001b). In such a situation, it is appropriate to use a qualitative research method in order to gather the necessary information (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994). By examining in depth a single program of development, factors and procedures can be identified that have more universal application and learning curves can be enhanced to increase the speed and effectiveness of entrepreneurial program development. The current research necessitated that observations be made of the process of starting a new entrepreneurship and small business center in great detail. Thus, a research method described by Audet and d'Amboise (1998) was adopted which was broad-minded and flexible. As in this study, the goal of this analysis is "to combine rigor, flexibility and structure without unduly restricting our research endeavor" (Audet and 'Amboise, 1998, p. 11 of 24).

We use a case study design (Yin, 1994) to describe the efforts of a regional, public university to develop and operate a comprehensive entrepreneurship program. The literature suggests that many models of entrepreneurial education are followed (Katz (2006); Kuratko (2003); Katz (2003); Fiet, 2001a, Solomon, et al., 2002, and Shepherd and Douglas, 1997), using a variety of pedagogies (Solomon, et al., 2002), in many American colleges and universities. Recent studies in entrepreneurship (St. John and Heriot, 1991; Abdel-Latif and Nugent, 1996; and Rialp-Criado, Urbano and Vaillant, 2003) have demonstrated that case research has a high exploratory power and allows dynamic, decision-making processes to be more deeply investigated (Audet and d'Amoise, 1998).

This approach describes the process of creating this new program using a three-step approach. First, the extant literature is surveyed to sample the models for creating and operating an entrepreneurship program and small business or entrepreneurship center. Second, the current

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situation in the university at the time the charge was made to create an entrepreneurship program is evaluated. Next, the steps that were taken to build a program in entrepreneurship are systematically evaluated leading to the development of an entrepreneurial program. Lastly, we discuss the conclusions of this study.

## SUPPORTING LITERATURE

The literature on entrepreneurship education is still in a developmental stage (Fiet, 2001a). This conclusion is startling when one considers just how far entrepreneurial phenomena have come in the last thirty years. As noted earlier, more than 1600 universities and colleges now offer at least one course about entrepreneurship or small businesses (Solomon, et al, 2003). Yet, considerable fragmentation exists among scholars and teachers about how to define entrepreneurship (Fiet, 2001a) and how to best teach entrepreneurship (Solomon, et al, 2003).

Entrepreneurship education has been evaluated from a variety of perspectives including what is taught, why it is taught, how it is taught, and how well it works (see Gorman and Hanlon, 1997; Vesper and Gartner, 1997; Solomon, Winslow, and Tarabishy, 1998). The problem with assessing entrepreneurship education is that no generally accepted pedagogical model has been adopted in the U.S. or Europe (Solomon, et. al. 2003). Given that some researchers suggest that "[t]he concept of entrepreneurship is inadequately defined [, and] this lack of a clear entrepreneurship paradigm poses problems for both policy makers and for academics" (Carton, Hofer, and Meeks, 1998, p.1 of 11), the state of entrepreneurial education cannot be too surprising. If we cannot agree on the phenomena we are discussing, it becomes very difficult to develop a curriculum or build an academic program based upon those phenomena.

Solomon, et al. (2003), discuss the results of a twenty-year investigation of teaching entrepreneurial education and small business management in the U.S. Their data is based upon six national surveys. They believe a trend exists toward greater integration of practical applications and technology. They note that new venture creation, small business management, and small business consulting remain the most popular courses in the field.

Shepherd and Douglas (1997) argue that entrepreneurial education falls into four categories. These categories are as the Old War Stories approach, the Case Study approach, the Planning approach, and the Generic Action approach. The "*Old War Stories*" Approach provides a series of success stories told by entrepreneurs. The emphasis is upon experience, intuition, and judgment. The leader's innate qualities are emphasized without any recognition of the contribution of the organization or the environment. This approach uses very little theory and emphasizes anecdotal evidence. The "*Case Study*" Approach assumes that entrepreneurship is "a process that is a controlled and conscious thought process" (Shepherd, et al., 1997, p. 4 of 10). Mintzberg (199) argues that this perspective assumes that formulation can be separated from acting, as if the world stands still while the planning occurs. The "*Planning*" Approach breaks a controlled, conscious

process into a series of steps that lead to a full-blown strategy, often in the form of a business plan. Meyer (2001) argues that the use of business plans may be problematic. He questions whether we have validated the hypothesized positive relationship between business plans and firm performance. Shepherd, et. al. (1997) also question its usefulness because the very nature of planning is designed to extrapolate known trends. Thus, the planning process is too inflexible to accommodate the entrepreneurial spirit. The "*Generic Action*" Approach is linked to the competitive markets model. It assumes that market forces, such as bluffing, price deterrence, and the timing of entry, dictate action. "Once formulated, there is no need for initiative, 'only' implementation" (Shepherd, et al. 1999, p. 5 of 10). This approach argues that after scanning the environment, the entrepreneur will be able to draw appropriate conclusions necessary to move in the right direction. Shepherd, et al., are critical of this approach, arguing that this form of entrepreneurship education emphasizes the science of entrepreneurship while ignoring the art of entrepreneurship. Sheperd, et. al. emphasize the importance of creative thinking and learning throughout entrepreneurship education. They believe entrepreneurship should be taught so that the direction is deliberate but the details are emergent.

Leo Dana (1992) surveyed 55 universities in Europe having a business school, and he describes a variety of programs in France, Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden. Dana states that in some European countries "culture and social policy are such that entrepreneurs are not looked upon as necessarily good elements...."(Dana, 1992, p. 80). He concludes that Europe's strength in entrepreneurial education is its their practical approach. He also believes Europe has spread its entrepreneurship education programs to rural areas more so than the U.S. He expresses concern that Europe emphasizes small business education more than entrepreneurship and that Europe has not developed doctoral programs in entrepreneurship as are found at several U.S. universities. Dana experiences some ambiguity regarding the term entrepreneurship. While he recognizes an emphasis on small business management in Europe, he categorizes these types of programs as representative of the "state of *entrepreneurial* education in Europe" (Dana, 1992, 75, italics added), confusing small business and entrepreneurship. His research ignores the Small Business Institute (SBI) program in the U.S. At the time of his data collection (circa 1991-1992), the SBI program was flourishing in the United States as it was funded through the U.S. Small Business Administration. In 1992, the SBI program had approximately 500 members, colleges and universities that provided student-based consulting on behalf of small businesses, some of whom were entrepreneurial firms ([www.sbida.org](http://www.sbida.org)).

Twaalfhoven (2001) provides some interesting comparisons between the U.S. and European funding for entrepreneurship education that are more current than Dana's (1992) study. His research of 22 European and 47 North American business schools shows that U.S. business schools have six times more funds for entrepreneurial research than their European counterparts, as well as three times more professors and three times more courses in entrepreneurship. Amazingly, among his sample of schools, U.S. business schools receive 20 times more funding from alumni and

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entrepreneurs than European business schools. Clearly, these findings cannot be generalized to all American universities. The resources available to colleges and universities for new programs varies considerably.

In their research, Vesper and Gartner (1997) present the survey results of ranked university entrepreneurship programs. The top seven criteria for ranking these programs were courses offered, faculty publications, impact on community, alumni exploits, innovations, alumni start-ups, and outreach to scholars. While some American universities may wish to focus on these criteria as they develop a new entrepreneurship program, it remains to be seen if these criteria are meaningful or affordable for all universities. Issues such as accreditation, program funding, faculty, goals, and current programs clearly will impact the importance of these criteria for anyone wanting to create a new, comprehensive program in entrepreneurship.

## RESEARCH METHOD

As noted earlier, this research adopts a qualitative research design in keeping with the desire to show a single program development strategy with implications for benchmarking by others. While it is understood resources and goals widely vary among different types of universities, much can be learned from the successful development of an entrepreneurial program that would have implications for the creation of applications in other locations in the U.S.

### Background

In a large, public university in the south, an Endowed Professor in Entrepreneurship was hired to “develop the spirit of entrepreneurship.” Prior to joining the university, the new endowed chair served as the Director of a Small Business Institute program for 30 years and as a professor of entrepreneurship at a regional western university. During this time he supervised over 500 student consulting projects with businesses in the area. In addition, he gained prominence as an officer in two academic organizations devoted to the study of entrepreneurship and small businesses.

### The University

The university was a comprehensive university with a student body of approximately 17,000 students at the time the endowed chair was hired. The university has programs of study in Education and Behavioral Science, Health and Human Services, Business, Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and Science and Engineering. The university also owns a two-year community college about two miles from the main campus. The university has 88 academic majors and 57 academic minors. In addition, it offers the master of arts, master of arts in education, master of business administration, master of science, master of music, master of public service, the master of public

administration, and a cooperative doctorate in education administration with the state's Land Grant University.

In the following paragraphs, we describe his efforts, as well as those of his colleagues and the administration, to create a comprehensive program in entrepreneurship. Procedures and strategies indicating why and when things were done are described in some detail. Concurrent developments within the University and community are included to provide a context for how the current infrastructure was developed.

### **Evolution and Development**

In hindsight, one observes five distinct stages of development of the comprehensive program in entrepreneurship. However, these stages were not clearly distinguished at the time different initiatives and programs were being considered and developed. Nonetheless, we use them as a loose way of describing the many activities that occurred between August 2001 and the present day. Table 1 shows the significant milestones that have occurred since the program was begun in 2001.

Stage one involved the initial efforts to create a program that was recognized by colleagues in and outside the College of Business. In August 2001, this regional public university did not have an entrepreneurship program. The President and other administrators, including the Dean of the College of Business, brought to campus a new endowed chair with the charge of developing an entrepreneurship program and assigned this individual in the management department. The President had recently demonstrated his own entrepreneurial skill by privatizing the dorms and food services on campus leading to a huge success in both endeavors. When this individual arrived on campus in August 2001, the only course on campus directly related to entrepreneurship or small business was a course in Small Business Finance.

Upon arriving on campus, the strategy was to fully assess the situation recognizing potential opportunities, and roadblocks and then penetrate into the consciousness of the faculty and administration. The visibility of continuous development has been one of the foundations of program strategy. The assessment included opinions, political culture, attitudes, options, and financial resources available. It was determined that a few members of the faculty in several departments were generally supportive, but lacked power. Politically, the resource allocation system was (and remains) based upon student-credit-hours (SCH), so departmental chairs within the College of Business were defensive of existing courses and the allocation of faculty to those courses. They were also somewhat resistant to the creation of new courses as they might compete with existing electives. Administratively, the Dean and Management Department chair were very supportive. Financial resources available in the endowed chair account were considerable and there were also substantial developmental funds available in various foundation accounts in the Dean's office.

To establish visibility and initial penetration, a new course was established in entrepreneurship at the junior level (no prerequisites) in the undergraduate program and also as an

elective in the MBA. This course was taught in the first semester and resulted in the determination that initially focus should be placed upon developing the undergraduate entrepreneurial initiatives. While a few courses would be taught at the MBA level over the next five years, MBA entrepreneurial development was postponed until the undergraduate program could be fully developed.

**Table 1. Summary of Milestones for a Comprehensive New Program in Entrepreneurship**

Milestone	Date	Comment
Assessment of Situation	Fall 2001 to Fall 2002	Continuous Strategic Process
Development of Penetration Strategy	Fall 2001 to Fall 2002	AACSB Continuous Improvement Efforts are Used
Create Entrepreneurship Class	Fall 2001	Offered each fall and spring since August 2001
Establish Small Business Institute Capstone Course	Spring 2002	Very popular among all business students
Create Faculty and Departmental Incentives	Fall 2002	Ongoing
Get Other Departments Involved	Spring 2003	Evolving Process as non-business departments are contacted
Establish Financial Support	Spring 2003	Ongoing
Gain Political and Organizational Support	Fall 2001 through Spring 2003	Pervasive
Add Entrepreneurship Faculty Position	Spring 2003	Stable as of Fall 2006
Encourage Interdepartmental E-ship courses	Spring 2003	Continues as Needed
Build a Critical Mass of E-ship Courses	Fall 2004 to Spring 2005	Ongoing as a new major is being proposed
Establish Cross Disciplinary E-ship Minor	Fall 2003 to Spring 2005	Continuous Process; currently have 127 students in minor
Create Entrepreneurial Expo	Spring 2004	Held each spring since 2004
Develop Flexible E-ship Major	Fall 2005 to Spring 2006	Ongoing
Create Entrepreneurship Center and Get Funding	April 2004; April 2005	Continuous; more money is always a need

In addition to the entrepreneurial course, a critical step was taken in the second semester to propose a senior capstone course, Small Business Analysis and Policy, as an alternative to Business Policy. This course is designed to allow students to analyze local companies in teams, writing substantial consulting reports for the business and is associated with the Small Business Institute program (SBI). The strategy behind the introduction of this SBI course had several dimensions. First, because it is an option to the capstone course in the business core (approved by AACSB many times), it is guaranteed to generate 25-30 good students in their final semester. Secondly, the

eventual design of the minor in entrepreneurship would require business majors to elect to take this option since it provides an entrepreneurial capstone course. By establishing two of the courses required for the minor, it made it possible to increase the visibility of the program's development. Politically, the Strategy and Policy capstone was not popular and other department faculty were pleased to have an alternative.

In addition to these two courses, which are both offered through the Management Department, the existing course in Small Business Finance was changed to Entrepreneurial Finance by working directly with the faculty member and Finance Department chair. Departmental incentives were also approved to award \$500 to any faculty developing an approved course in entrepreneurship once it was taught once. In addition four or five faculty was identified from multiple departments to attend a national entrepreneurship conference at the expense of the endowed account to encourage entrepreneurial research and course development. This incentive program resulted in successful course development and subsequent interest among faculty. Finally, recognition, appreciation, and support regarding faculty and department chair cooperation and contribution were delivered at faculty meetings, administrative meetings, and honor banquets. This publicity made it became more popular to be associated with entrepreneurship. The emergence from initial stage one development to stage two occurred during the second year of the program. The organizational culture of the University as well as the College of Business was developing entrepreneurially. The state government authorized developmental funds to launch Innovation and Commercialization Centers (ICCs) across the state. The local ICC was established in partnership with the University and was placed in a deserted mall acquired by the University's President. The endowed chair immediately became a partner and board member of the ICC. Simultaneously, planning for a Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI) was initiated by the endowed chair. It would take a year for the CEI to become a reality during stage three.

In addition to planning for the CEI, in the second year a proposal was prepared to seek an additional faculty member in entrepreneurship and it was approved by the Provost. An Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship was hired for the fall of 2003. Three additional courses were developed in entrepreneurship during this second year stage two time period bringing the total to six courses. These six courses included three departments and provided a critical class in entrepreneurial marketing. This class was critical because it added a second level course in marketing to the minor and attracted a wide range of students to the minor who could also use the marketing course for other majors and minors. It also further involved the Marketing Department in the entrepreneurial minor. The six courses as previously mentioned were then packaged with courses throughout the university that would provide direct entrepreneurial relevance to majors across campus to create the minor in entrepreneurship. The minor was approved in the spring of 2003 with an initial start of fall 2003. The infrastructure to move into stage three in the fall of 2003 was now in place. Stage three in the third year witnessed significant visibility increases. The second faculty member in entrepreneurship immediately expanded the number of sections available in



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entrepreneurship as well as increasing elective offerings from six to eight. These sections in entrepreneurship served as a recruitment ground for the entrepreneurship minor. Further, partnerships with the ICC and other evolving entrepreneurial initiatives were possible. The two entrepreneurial faculty developed a synergy expanding capabilities. This led to the construction and creation of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (a \$50k construction project), expansion to forty-four students in the Entrepreneurship Minor by the end of the first year, and the first annual Entrepreneurial Expo with over 100 people attending including local entrepreneurial speakers. Several other programs were done to enhance the visibility of the program such as the Small Business Institute program through the senior capstone course with 35 business analyses completed with 40-100 page consulting reports each.

In the fourth year of the program, stage three initiatives continued with an additional 15 business analyses, linkage of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation with the ICC and other Centers such as the International Center and the Kelly Autism Program, and an increase in electives in entrepreneurship to nine courses. The additional electives were necessary to provide sufficient sections for students in the entrepreneurship minor to obtain their three required entrepreneurial electives. The Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation was fortunate to have two people join the staff as Associate Director and Office Manager. Their contributions created a multiplier affect that greatly increased the effectiveness of the Center.

The Entrepreneurial Expo expanded to include a Business Plan Competition with \$15,000 in prize money with well over 100 students and visitors in attendance including many community leaders. The entrepreneurial minor was expanded to be interdisciplinary with flexible designs for students majoring in engineering, the arts, agriculture and others. The number of students in the minor by the end of the second year increased to 77 students.

Finally in this last half of stage three in the fourth year, a successful Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) team was created and in the first year won a regional championship, a national rookie team of the year award in their division, Best in the U. S. first place national competition and two out of four national categorical competitions. Projects completed in the community were the basis for their competitive edge. At this point toward the end of stage three, the entrepreneurial program and spirit had a significant momentum.

The fifth year of the program added another 15 business analyses through the Small Business Institute (Small Business Capstone). The number of students in the minor in entrepreneurship increased to 124 including students from majors all over campus. In addition, the Expo continued with 17 competitive business plans submitted and was networked with a major local private university. During the fifth year, numerous projects were carried out with the ICC, International Center, Hispanic Center, Autism Center and other community and University programs. There was a transition of the second faculty member to move toward their own endowed chair at another university, but a strong replacement was identified that has guaranteed continuity of the programs. Faculty, department heads, the new Dean of the College of Business, the Provost and the President

have all expressed total support for the continued development of entrepreneurial initiatives across campus. During the fifth year, the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation received a \$35,000 operating budget from the Provost.

The student-led SIFE program has become a vital learning tool for students in the entrepreneurship program. It has received a great deal of publicity due to its successes. From the new Print Center on campus named for and operated by SIFE to the Presidents' recognition of the achievements of SIFE in the State of the University address, SIFE has continued to move beyond their initial first-year success in an effort to compete successfully at the national level in future SIFE competitions. At the end of the fifth year, SIFE won another regional competition, five of the six national categorical competitions, second in the nation in one of these categories, and number one in the SIFE Best in the U. S. Competition. In the fifth year, SIFE students completed 14 major community projects. Not only did the entrepreneurship minors walk away with all of the top honors given by the College of Business, many of them were selected for very lucrative jobs by national employers.

The beginning of year six (Fall 2006) represents the beginning of Stage Four. In addition to continuous improvement and visibility related development of all of the programs previously mentioned, a new major in entrepreneurship has been designed and will be proposed with expected approval this academic year. Major recruitment efforts across campus have put SIFE into a position to accomplish more and to be even more nationally competitive. The Provost approved and funded a Director for the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and three research publications in entrepreneurship are scheduled to be published this year.

The fifth stage of the program has yet to occur. It will come to fruition over the next 12 – 24 months as new initiatives are identified and current programs mature. The infrastructure is now almost in place to sustain the entrepreneurial programs without the leadership of the endowed chair. Distance learning, new revolutionary entrepreneurial major designs, expansion of entrepreneurship to the MBA, the addition of a second endowed chair in entrepreneurship (third faculty member) within three years from now, expansion of the SIFE team to over 100 members, continued growth of the E-ship Minor to 200, creation and development of the E-ship Major with over one hundred students, continued CEI program development, expansion of the Small Business Institute to over 60 businesses analyzed, linkage with the International Business major to conduct international entrepreneurial initiatives, and other visible continuous improvement entrepreneurial spirit developments represent part of stage four development in academic year six. Some of these programs will continue for the next two to three years before they become mature programs.

## DISCUSSION

In order to assess all that has been discussed in this case study, we have chosen to emphasize five issues that were central to the process of creating and sustaining the program in

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entrepreneurship. These issues are consistent with how other researchers have evaluated entrepreneurship education in the extant literature: what is taught, why it is taught, how it is taught, and how well it works (see Gorman and Hanlon, 1997; Vesper and Gartner, 1997; Solomon, Winslow and Tarabishy, 1998). The literature on organizational change emphasizes the importance of leadership. (NEED citation here). Thus, to this list we add “leadership support.”

### **Leadership Support**

Leadership support is not specifically discussed in the entrepreneurship education literature. However, the management literature emphasizes the importance of leadership support when pursuing any new initiative. Thus, this important issue is considered.

It would not have been possible to create a comprehensive program in entrepreneurship without the support and encouragement of the President, and, subsequently, the Provost of the university. Both of these individuals supported almost all of the new initiatives in entrepreneurship. Their support in the strategic management process was critical to new initiatives being approved and funded. Without their support, the efforts of the endowed faculty member would most likely have been limited to the creation of new courses in entrepreneurship rather than a comprehensive program that also included service, experiential learning, outreach, and research activities.

### **What Is Taught**

The program in entrepreneurship started with a whimper rather than a bang. The reason for such a less than stellar start was simply the reality that the program started from scratch with only one faculty member assigned to entrepreneurship. Thus, the program did not have the capability to offer multiple classes. Successive courses were developed as new faculty resources were added. As the program was developed, the program used feedback from students, faculty, and practicing entrepreneurs to identify gaps, deficiencies, and difficulties in specific courses. The plethora of courses that are offered in universities in the U.S. and Europe suggest that a large variety of topics will elicit interest. It would appear that new venture creation and small business management are among the most popular courses with students, and perhaps small business counseling as well. It is probably premature to offer this course without considerable preparation by the faculty. While student-based counseling is very popular in the US, the U.S. also has a 26-year tradition in the Small Business Institute program as well as other outreach programs.

### **Why It Is Taught**

The introductory course, MGT 312, Entrepreneurship is the fundamental course in the overall academic program. However, the College of Business has wisely been offering an

Introduction to Business and Entrepreneurship course that is required of all freshmen enrolled in business. This course attracts a number of non-business students as well as students that have not declared a major. Hence, the course serves as a natural vehicle to recruit more students to the entrepreneurship program.

### **How It Is Taught**

Pedagogical issues are among the most debated in the entrepreneurship education literature. A variety of techniques are used in entrepreneurship and small business management courses. These techniques include, but are not limited to, case studies, lectures, experiential exercises, business plans, consulting projects, and guest speakers. Just as entrepreneurship itself is often associated with creativity and innovation (see, e.g., Kuratko and Hodgetts, 2001), teaching entrepreneurship has similar associations. The faculty should feel free to use any technique they believe will enhance the learning environment. As Schaper (1999) argues, numerous techniques are a wiser choice than only one or two regular techniques.

The program at this university uses a broad approach with state-of-the-art entrepreneurship education and pedagogies. Ranging from stage-wise development of ideas, feasibility studies, business plans, and business analyses to hands on applied business application, students are taught to be effective in the entrepreneurial world.

### **How Well It Works**

The program can be evaluated using a variety of benchmarks. As noted, Vesper and Gartner's research (1997) indicate that highly ranked programs are evaluated based upon course offerings, faculty publications, community impact, alumni exploits, innovations, alumni start-ups, and outreach to scholars. These categories reflect a set of standards that are the cumulative result of over 20 years of teaching entrepreneurship. Applying these grandiose standards to a new program would not be valid. Thus, in our assessment, we have selected three or four standards which may or may not reflect the larger American experience.

These standards include course offerings and students enrolled in the Minor and Major including breadth and organization of course design, flexibility and utility of the minor and major. Qualifications of faculty, availability of a Center for Entrepreneurship, and financial resources available to the entrepreneurial program contribute to the standards. Successful involvement of students in both the Small Business Institute competitions and SIFE competitions address the issue of student engagement and contribute to standards of excellence. Finally, degree of administrative support, popularity among students, and university-wide impact should be considered in the standard.

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## LIMITATIONS

This study is limited by the nature of case studies (Yin, 1994). The findings of case studies cannot always be generalized to other situations. However, given the lack of a universal model for entrepreneurship education, it was both practically and theoretically appropriate to use a case study. While the results of this research may not specifically be extended to other American universities, the faculty and administration at other universities may certainly use the current study as the basis for their own efforts to start a comprehensive program in entrepreneurship.

## IMPLICATIONS

As noted previously, we understand that the observations and detailed description of the steps that were followed at this public university may not be generalized to other situations. However, we believe that this study makes a contribution to the literature and to the practical efforts of individuals seeking to create a new entrepreneurship program or to expand their existing program.

## Theory and Method

This case study generally affirms the findings of Solomon and his colleagues (2003). Nonetheless, the reader is able to obtain a more detailed view of the actions of one university. Such a perspective is simply not possible as a field of study moves from an stage of theory development to a stage of theory testing that entails traditional quantitative survey research.

This study demonstrates the value of the case method as a means of evaluating a phenomena in great detail. While survey designs, especially as a discipline grows and matures, give us insight into the aggregate efforts of a large group of individuals or organizations, a qualitative study offers a detailed perspective which may uncover issues that are lost in the process of aggregating the quantitative results of a study involving numerous participants.

This research proposes the use of a case-study method as a highly valuable qualitative research strategy. The choice of a case study method is theoretically driven. Recent studies of the activities of small firms (St. John and Heriot, 1991; Abdel-Latif and Nugent, 1996; and Rialp-Criado, Urbano and Vaillant, 2003) have demonstrated that case research has a high exploratory power and allows dynamic, decision-making processes to be more deeply investigated (Audet and d'Amoise, 1998). In particular, the case-based methodology is applicable to the discovery of the process of developing a foreign market. It overcomes some methodological limitations associated with previous research (Aldrich and Martinez, 2001).

This gap in the literature points out the need for further new theory development. In fact, in their study of the international efforts of small firms, Rialp-Criado, Urbano and Vaillant (2003) argue that the use of traditional quantitative survey methods may not be appropriate as it may yield

empirical difficulties. More recently, Lloyd-Reason, Sear and Mughan (2003) argue that a lack of process understanding, in part, stems from a paucity of multi-disciplinary studies and a tendency to use quantitative methods to provide insights into internationalisation in the SME. They echo the need for process insights made by Aldrich and Martinez (2001) who suggest that there is a need to explore the interaction between process and context and how this influences entrepreneurial behavior. Thus, the case methodology is very well suited to the current research.

### **Benchmarking**

Perhaps the most important implication this study may have is to serve as a template or benchmark for individuals that would like to create a comprehensive program in entrepreneurship or to take their existing program beyond a simple academic emphasis. More importantly, given the lack of formally trained entrepreneurship educators, this study provides a detailed assessment of the foundation and creation of a program that has grown from literally nothing to a comprehensive academic program of study in five years. While the specific objectives and milestones of any academic program are unique to that institution, this study may be used as a benchmark for the efforts of others to create their own comprehensive entrepreneurship program for their university or college.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Upon reading the literature on entrepreneurship education and observing the current situation at the university, one of the few definitive conclusions one can reach is that the university has made an ambitious move to create a comprehensive program in entrepreneurship. The program includes a mixture of teaching, outreach, experiential learning, community service, and applied research. The biggest challenge to the program will be to manage the momentum. Rapid expansion leads to complex issues of resource allocation, choices regarding direction, and infrastructure challenges.

The university must be prepared to make adjustments to accommodate increasing numbers of non-business students in the Minor In Entrepreneurship. The key to doing so will be to internally recruit faculty who are prepared to teach elective courses and sections of entrepreneurship courses that include students without the traditional prerequisite courses associated with most upper level business classes. Unique and creative course designs in fields such as accounting will challenge the academic community to step out of their comfort zones. Traditional departmental “silos” that protect program SCH measures must give way to interdepartmental and cross-campus cooperation. But with these challenges, there is also tremendous opportunity for a new creative way to educate the entrepreneurs of tomorrow!

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