

ENTREPRENEURIAL CAMPUSES:
Action, Impact, and Lessons Learned
from the Kauffman Campus Initiative

Wendy E.F. Torrance
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation

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The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation launched the Kauffman Campuses Initiative (KCI) in December 2003 to encourage new, interdisciplinary entrepreneurship education programs throughout American colleges and universities.¹ The Foundation sought to make entrepreneurship a campus-wide experience, to help schools become more entrepreneurial, and to ensure that thousands of students on diverse campuses would begin to see their own knowledge and resources from a more entrepreneurial perspective. Eight universities were part of KCI¹ when it launched in 2003. In 2006, five more universities and five Northeast Ohio liberal arts colleges (in partnership with the Burton D. Morgan Foundation) were selected for the KCI program, for a total of eighteen universities.² As the grant program reaches its conclusion, we saw an opportunity to examine the work that was done on a diverse set of campuses and learn from the experiences of these schools. To that end, the Foundation convened a group of thought leaders for a day of intensive discussion in September 2012. In addition, campus leaders from KCI schools submitted reflective essays in early 2012, expressing the ways in which the KCI grants transformed their campuses and culture, created opportunities for students, engaged and inspired faculty, and created a foundation for the future of entrepreneurship on their campuses and in their communities. Together, these essays and the conference afford us the opportunity to highlight some of the significant transformations that have taken place at the eighteen KCI campuses, as well as at other entrepreneurial schools around the country.

With this collection, we share the essays we received in order to bring these stories and perspectives to light. These pieces reveal the common themes that emerged as schools sought to create a more substantial place for entrepreneurship on their campuses. They illuminate the varied experiences of the participating schools, the similarities and differences in their approaches, and the lessons learned. They synthesize the accomplishments of the KCI and offer observations and models that may be helpful to other campuses and their communities as they endeavor to strengthen existing entrepreneurship programs or to launch new efforts to bring entrepreneurship to campuses. At the Foundation, we see this collection of essays as both an inspiration and a guide for future work. We learned invaluable lessons from our collaboration with

¹ The Kauffman Campus Initiative benefitted from the leadership and support of several Kauffman associates and affiliates over the years, including Judith Cone, John Courtin, Bill Green, Rita Hull, Carl Schramm, Marge Smelstor, and Nancie Thomas, the engagement of Deborah Hoover and the Burton D. Morgan Foundation, and the vision of our collaborators on each and every campus.

² The eight inaugural KCI schools were selected in 2003: University of Rochester (Rochester), Wake Forest University (Wake Forest), Howard University, Florida International University (FIU), University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Washington University in St. Louis (Washington University), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Illinois), and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (University of North Carolina). A second round of schools were selected in 2006: Arizona State University (Arizona State), Purdue University (Purdue), Syracuse University (Syracuse), University of Wisconsin-Madison (Wisconsin), and the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. The Northeast Ohio schools funded in collaboration with the Burton D. Morgan Foundation included Baldwin Wallace College (Baldwin Wallace), College of Wooster, Hiram College, Lake Erie College (Lake Erie), and Oberlin College (Oberlin).

the KCI schools and from the observations they shared from their experiences in the initiative. These lessons and insights will inform our continuing efforts in both education and entrepreneurship.

Reflections: Action and Creation

The KCI schools were a diverse group in many ways. From size³ and student demographics to institution type, the campuses brought varying levels of experience with entrepreneurship education to the table. They included large, state university campuses like Arizona State and UTEP, as well as smaller liberal arts colleges like Wake Forest and Oberlin. As one might expect, the nature, breadth, and depth of the programs and initiatives they implemented were varied, and it seems fair to conclude that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to implementing entrepreneurship education.

That said, every campus implemented a combination of classroom and co-curricular initiatives, created focal points for entrepreneurial activity, supported experiential learning, and adopted programs to engage alumni and the community in the work they were doing. Some campuses distinguished themselves nationally for their work in entrepreneurship education. In 2012, *Entrepreneur* magazine listed four KCI campuses in its list of the top twenty-five schools for entrepreneurs: Washington University, Arizona State, University of North Carolina, and Syracuse. Several campuses also have attracted additional grant support and recognition for their programs from the National Science Foundation and the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA).

The KCI campuses created courses, programs, and majors that reached thousands of students in disciplines ranging from human ecology, art, and theatre to education and business. Campuses created opportunities for students to major and minor in innovation and entrepreneurship. Several campuses—Arizona State, Illinois, and Washington University—reached every department on campus. At Syracuse (and its five partner campuses), student enrollment in courses infused with entrepreneurship more than tripled, from 1,800 to 7,500 students annually. Before its participation in the KCI, Wake Forest “had no formal programs or initiatives to serve non-business school students or faculty interested in entrepreneurship.”⁴ In this case, the KCI grant brought an entirely new perspective to non-business students at the school. At UTEP, Washington University, Oberlin, and others, the number of departments offering courses in entrepreneurship significantly increased. The number of schools teaching entrepreneurship at Washington University, for example, increased from one to seven.

In many instances, entrepreneurship found its way into disciplines not typically associated with the phenomenon. Several essays cited the great strides that campuses made in encouraging faculty (and students) from fields such as education, religion, environmental studies, nursing, and women’s studies to embrace the idea of entrepreneurship education. Through the KCI, entrepreneurship courses and co-

³ Enrollments ranged from just under 5,000 to nearly 40,000.

⁴ Wake Forest, p. 2.

curricular opportunities reached students who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to consider how to apply entrepreneurial problem-solving skills, innovative thinking, and value creation to their particular fields.

At Arizona State, for example, the p.a.v.e (performing arts venture experience) program in the School of Theatre and Film creates curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to learn how the “principles of entrepreneurship can support the development of creative opportunities for all artists.”⁵ Similarly, the Eastman School of Music at Rochester is creating entrepreneurial musicians. Its New Venture Challenge is a contest to encourage new thinking and innovative ideas in music. Rochester’s nursing school also has made entrepreneurship a core part of its program; its Center for Nursing Entrepreneurship trains nurses to be entrepreneurs and innovators in their field and supports innovative ideas.

Several schools incorporated entrepreneurship into courses required for all students. Campuses as diverse as UTEP, Arizona State, and College of Wooster introduce large numbers of students to the principles of entrepreneurship and innovation early in their careers. An introductory class at Arizona State, ASU 101, reaches *every* first-year student on campus and exposes them to the idea of entrepreneurship. UTEP, likewise, incorporated entrepreneurship into University Studies 1301, an introductory course that is required for all entering freshmen.

The schools also created numerous centers for entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity,⁶ and countless students were encouraged to share their ideas through competitions.⁷ Many students were even able to fulfill their visions for a new venture⁸ as a result of their universities’ support for entrepreneurship education and mentoring—creating value by solving real problems for their ultimate customers.

Several campuses created initiatives that have been implemented on other campuses. For example, Wisconsin has extended the reach of its programs to other campuses in the Wisconsin system, and organized the first-ever System-wide Summit on Entrepreneurship that brought together faculty and staff from twelve of the thirteen four-year institutions as well as two-year schools. Washington University’s IdeaBounce[®] has been used on several other campuses, and Syracuse has worked both locally and regionally to enhance entrepreneurship and innovation, and has engaged community colleges in its region.

Faculty members have been an essential part of the equation on campuses. The KCI created opportunities for them to participate, and they have created and taught courses

⁵ Arizona State, p. 19.

⁶ For example: UTEP: Center for Research, Entrepreneurship, and Innovative Enterprises (CREIE); Rochester: Center for Entrepreneurship; Baldwin Wallace: Center for Innovation and Growth; FIU: Pino Center for Entrepreneurship; Illinois: Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership; College of Wooster: Center for Innovation and Creativity (now Center for Entrepreneurship (C4E)). Centers also were established at Hiram College, Purdue, Wisconsin, Arizona State, Lake Erie, and Wake Forest.

⁷ For example: Rochester: Regional Business Plan Competition, Arizona State: Innovation Challenge.

⁸ See examples from student testimonials in essays from Arizona State, Oberlin, and Wisconsin, as well as Terrier Bakery at Hiram College and co-curricular activities at Oberlin.

across disciplines. Faculty fellowships and seminars took place on many campuses, including UTEP, FIU, Purdue, Illinois, and Wake Forest. At Hiram College, 95 percent of its faculty, including members of every department, attended summer workshops called, “Entrepreneurship and the Liberal Arts.” At Wake Forest, fifty-two faculty members from twenty-eight departments participated in faculty seminars related to entrepreneurship. Faculty members at Illinois were particularly prolific with research concerning entrepreneurship. The Illinois report notes: “Since 2004, over 120 Illinois researchers, representing every degree-granting unit on campus, have produced dissertations (33), book chapters, conference papers, and especially scholarly journal articles.”⁹

Campuses created links to their communities in a variety of ways. Syracuse’s vast portfolio of work related to this grant includes several initiatives that afford local entrepreneurs the opportunity to learn from the university, as well as initiatives designed to engage students in solving problems in the community. Universities involved local entrepreneurs as mentors, and brought alumni entrepreneurs back to campus to share their experiences. Rochester extended its work into the community through collaborations with non-profits and through technology transfer enhancements that contributed to regional development.

UTEP took seriously its contribution to the training of future business leaders and entrepreneurs in its region. UTEP’s Institute of Oral History was funded to tell seventy-five stories of Hispanic entrepreneurs in the Paso del Norte Region, with UTEP students conducting the interviews. The El Paso Times featured a column every Sunday highlighting one of these entrepreneurs, and classes at UTEP use the interviews as part of the curriculum. This oral history collection will be featured in the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History “American Enterprise” exhibition, scheduled to open in 2014. Visitors to that exhibit will have the opportunity to learn about the contribution of entrepreneurs to that region and its economy, allowing UTEP to teach many people outside of its campus and community about the importance of entrepreneurship.

Reflection: Impact

The campus essays suggest that participation in the KCI led to significant changes in culture and mindset at the participating schools. Faculty, students, and administrators alike have had the opportunity to view entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity, and paths to employment in new ways. Indeed, faculty members in various fields changed how they thought about their students’ education. Rochester’s essay notes that before the grant, the Warner School of Education “had never considered entrepreneurship as a relevant perspective or paradigm for the work it was doing in education.”¹⁰ The KCI grant, however, inspired the program to think about “transforming ideas into enterprises that add value—and recognizing that ‘value’ could be interpreted as social and intellectual as well as economic.... We recognized that Warner’s mission of preparing educators as ‘change-agents’ was consistent with an entrepreneurial approach, and

⁹ Illinois, p. 9.

¹⁰ Rochester, p. 22.

became interested.”¹¹ The current website for the Rochester School of Nursing lists “Entrepreneurs,” among other things, on its “Who We Are” page.¹² And Baldwin Wallace’s Peter Rea notes that “faculty view entrepreneurship as a way for students to convert their passion for their discipline into opportunities.”¹³

Campuses such as Rochester, Arizona State, Syracuse, and Purdue indicate that one of their goals was to put entrepreneurship at the core of the university’s mission, and to create a culture in which entrepreneurship is, as Purdue administrators describe, “valued, promoted, and facilitated.”¹⁴ These universities created and reinforced programs across campus, identified ways to expose students to entrepreneurship, and engaged faculty and senior leaders in creating a sustainable future for entrepreneurship education. The Arizona State essay notes, the university has, “during the last decade, created what it calls a ‘New American University’ and embedded entrepreneurship in numerous ways: in the mission of the university, in its communications, in multiple disciplines and across the curriculum, and in co-curricular activities”.¹⁵

The impact of a new way of thinking on a campus seems to have been particularly profound on the liberal arts campuses. Here the KCI created new ways to think about knowledge, problem solving, and the potential contribution students could make to society through innovation and entrepreneurship. Oberlin, Baldwin Wallace, Wake Forest, and College of Wooster, in particular, discuss the change to their culture and approach to educating students.

The Oberlin report, for example, is candid about faculty and administrators’ initial uncertainty about the school’s “fit” with the program. However, when Oberlin administrators began to think about the initiative, they realized that the school had a long tradition of “creating change by posing solutions to challenges and needs.”¹⁶ In fact, Oberlin was the first co-educational college in 1833, and it was the first college to educate African American and white students together in 1835. The Oberlin report explains: “We recognized creativity, innovation, action, and leadership as essential elements of entrepreneurial endeavor, and indeed these are the very qualities Oberlin seeks to develop in its students. Oberlin’s popular admissions slogan ‘Think one person can change the world?’ captured what we came to recognize as an entrepreneurial mindset, and faculty and students immediately saw the connections between Oberlin’s culture and the culture of entrepreneurship.”¹⁷ Oberlin’s Creativity and Leadership Program “highlights and expands a culture that has long existed at Oberlin but had not been directly supported or actively encouraged. The program has provided a vital mechanism for integrating entrepreneurship into the educational fabric of the institution.”¹⁸ Now, they write, from students to trustees, “creativity, leadership,

¹¹ Rochester, p. 22.

¹² See <http://www.son.rochester.edu/welcome/>.

¹³ Baldwin Wallace, p. 5-6.

¹⁴ Purdue, p. 4.

¹⁵ Arizona State intro, p. 2-3.

¹⁶ Oberlin, p. 1.

¹⁷ Oberlin, p. 1.

¹⁸ Oberlin, p. 10.

innovation, and entrepreneurship are now cited proudly as hallmarks of an Oberlin education.”¹⁹

Baldwin Wallace’s report notes that the

“CIG [Center for Innovation and Growth] equips students to develop the art and science of entrepreneurship. The science of entrepreneurship is about skill, competency, and knowledge associated with growth and new venture creation. The art of entrepreneurship is about the mindset of imagination, commitment and passion associated with innovation. At its best, entrepreneurship encourages students to be intentional about making meaning in addition to making money. We rely on the classical virtues to help students get clear about making meaning. By encouraging students to live a purposeful life that solves human challenges, a natural union between the liberal arts and entrepreneurship is formed.”²⁰

Baldwin Wallace notes: “Let this fact sink in. Primarily Liberal Arts faculty designed and then unanimously approved an entrepreneurship major that will be housed in the Business Division.”²¹ Hiram College’s Thomas V. Chema echoes this idea: “To me, the most dramatic element of this sea change on our campus is the transformation in how our faculty members think about the future... They are looking at the ways they can help students prepare for the rest of their lives—and for their lives at work.”²²

Reflections: Lessons learned

Several campus essays, including those submitted by Kauffman Campuses and those prepared for our September discussion, highlight lessons that the campuses learned in the process of implementing entrepreneurship education across the curriculum. In addition, these reports from the front lines identify several key ingredients for success in becoming an entrepreneurial campus, revealing surprising consistency among this very diverse group of institutions.

Engage all faculty and administrators early. Some reports reflected on the importance of engaging faculty and administrators throughout the campus in far-reaching discussions, early on, about the definition of entrepreneurship and its place in their particular institutions. Oberlin, Wake Forest, Illinois, Hiram College, and Wisconsin all point to cross-campus discussion as important for laying the foundation for the implementation of new programs and as a key feature of successful cultural change. Likewise, Rochester engaged schools whose views and missions might have seemed remote from entrepreneurship in what turned out to be meaningful conversations about how the ideas associated with entrepreneurship could transform their campuses. The mechanisms for conducting these discussions varied, but campuses were clear about the benefits, as were faculty cited in their essays. College of Wooster, by contrast, did

¹⁹ Oberlin, p. 10.

²⁰ Baldwin Wallace, p. 12.

²¹ Baldwin Wallace, p. 5.

²² Hiram College, p. 11.

not reach out to faculty, and they regretted it: “In particular, our missteps included not involving faculty from the beginning, not providing the necessary institutional supports for entrepreneurial ventures, and finally, not integrating the program with our mission and culture. In particular, we did not articulate *why* we wanted entrepreneurship, and how it fit into our structure and culture at the moment and as we looked toward the future.”²³

Allow schools and departments to define entrepreneurship independently. Several campuses emphasized the importance of allowing various constituencies to define entrepreneurship in ways that fit with their disciplinary perspectives and the missions of their schools, at the institutional level, as well as the level of the various departments and schools. It is important, they emphasized, to let departments and faculty engage entrepreneurship in ways that resonate with their missions.

At Arizona State, for example, entrepreneurship and innovation became the cornerstone of their idea of the “New American University,” which embraced entrepreneurship as a core tenant. At Wake Forest, they used their motto of “Pro Humanitate”—to make a difference in the world—to motivate their thinking. They deliberately chose to define entrepreneurship broadly to ensure that it would appeal to their liberal arts community. Entrepreneurship, they suggested, is “the process through which individuals and groups take advantage of their knowledge and resources to identify and pursue opportunities, initiate change and create sustainable value in [students’] lives and the lives of others.”²⁴ In Women’s Studies at UTEP, faculty encouraged their students to apply the lens of problem solving to social problems, and, as noted above, the School of Nursing at Rochester now encourages its students to think about innovative ways to deliver health care.

Ensure support from campus leaders. The importance of support from top leadership appeared in reports from Arizona State, Lake Erie, Syracuse, and Illinois. Such engagement can help to secure financial support, but it also can help to ensure that programs are implemented across the campus.

Make entrepreneurship visible. Along with this notion of support from the top, many schools sought opportunities to “talk about it everywhere, all the time.” At Arizona State, Wisconsin, FIU, Syracuse, and others, campus-wide events highlighted entrepreneurship. Other universities, schools, and colleges also emphasized the ways in which they showcase entrepreneurship, their programs, and student efforts to seize opportunities.

²³ College of Wooster, p. 11.

²⁴ Wake Forest, p. 4.

Conclusion

As universities around the country have created entrepreneurship education programs or strengthened existing programs on their campuses, they have embraced the opportunity to be entrepreneurial themselves: to assess opportunity, evaluate needs, create the new, pivot, overcome challenges, and create lasting value campus-wide—for administrators, faculty, and students alike. We share these experiences with others in order to inspire them to start or enhance their own programs, and in order to congratulate these universities on the work they've done to send entrepreneurially minded students into the world.